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# **‘BALANCING ACT’**

**PIPA’S SURVEY INTO THE IMPACT  
OF CARING RESPONSIBILITIES ON  
CAREER PROGRESSION IN THE  
PERFORMING ARTS.**

**MARCH 2019**

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**PARENTS & CARERS  
IN PERFORMING ARTS**

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# FOREWORD

The United Kingdom's performing arts sector is vibrant, inventive and a major contributor not only to the UK economy and the cultural landscape but also to national identity. We have a responsibility to ensure that the reality of our industries, on- and off-stage, reflect the diversity of the UK's population.

Parents and Carers in Performing Arts (PiPA) has a vision of a performing arts sector that is inclusive of the parent and carer workforce. All workers should be able to sustain a fulfilling career and continue to make a positive contribution to the performing arts, regardless of caring responsibilities. No one should be restricted by the choice between having a family and being able to work.

Over the past decade huge strides have been taken to make the arts more accessible to all and to attract diverse audiences. As working practices in the UK evolve at a rapid pace, so too do the requirements of our workforce on whom we depend to deliver world class work. The industry is committed to an increased evaluation of our workforce and to redress imbalances.

The Balancing Act Survey findings identify that parents and carers pay a significant penalty in terms of well-being and remuneration in order to maintain a career in the performing arts whilst fulfilling caring responsibilities. Moreover, low pay, insecurity and anti-social hours means that the sector is losing talent which could threaten its resilience. Caring responsibilities can affect anyone at any point in their career; they can often create insurmountable barriers to continued working and can be the final straw that breaks people's commitment to stay within the industry.

The Balancing Act Survey highlights how the workforce – and especially those with caring responsibilities – rely on secondary employment or through the subsidies provided by partners or others. A small percentage of participants have benefitted from working practices highlighted in the PiPA Best Practice Charter, which have been effective for supporting the caring workforce. Developed in partnership with leading arts organisations and co-funded by the Arts Council England, the Charter Programme has shown that a multifaceted approach can be beneficial for supporting and retaining those with caring responsibilities. After two years of development, and in response to the Balancing Act Survey findings, the Programme will be available for performing arts organisations from early 2019. The sector could benefit from increased flexibility and removing barriers to entry and retention. In order to future-proof world class work that is truly reflective of our communities, we need to make the performing arts accessible for all. This research is simultaneously a call to action and an opportunity for growth.

The findings of the Balancing Act Survey provide much needed evidence and benchmark data that can help build the business case by making the invisible visible. Finally, thanks are due to the Birkbeck, University of London research team for the commitment, creativity and energy that they brought to the project. PiPA owes them a debt of gratitude.

**Cassie Raine and Anna Ehnold-Danailov**  
Co-Founders, PiPA

## CHAIR'S MESSAGE

*This report is the second survey by PiPA to shine a spotlight on the challenges faced by parents and carers in our creative workplaces. "The Balancing Act" is testimony to the work of the team, in particular Anna Ehnold-Danailov and Cassie Raine, but is also a powerful testimonial of the achievements of all those who daily balance caring private responsibilities with creating - both the makers and those supporting that creativity. All who do so already know just how much goes into making it work. As a sector we applaud the sacrifices and efforts made by those individuals to not just stay in the workplace, but also to thrive. Collectively we can see by the evidence from this report how much more we can do, both collaboratively and individually, to help support, retain and sustain inclusive talent.*

Amanda Parker, Chair, PiPA

# STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT

“This important research from PiPA and Birkbeck, University of London, aptly titled ‘Balancing Act’, demonstrates the reality for most parents in the creative industries; lower earnings, erratic hours, plus a lack of opportunity and support within the industry. There urgently needs to be a gear change in consciousness over this situation. PiPA is doing fantastic work finding evidence and offering long-overdue solutions to sectors that are powered by creativity but in certain areas can often be lacking in imagination. The UK’s performing arts employers need to follow PiPA’s recommendations and embrace flexible and return to work practices; not only is it entirely possible it makes good business sense.”

Vick Bain, Former CEO of BASCA (2012-2018)

“HMUK supports a thriving, diverse music industry, through our vital work offering a lifetime of support empowering musicians at all stages of their lives and careers when it is needed the most. By partnering and investing in research, we can identify need and gaps within the sector and look to shape our Programme to address that. The ‘Balancing Act’ research by PiPA is a great example of this and we are delighted to support it. The findings indicate parents and carers experience clear obstacles to career progression, the largely freelance workforce need support and infrastructure as well as equal career opportunities. It is clear that parents and carers contribute to a rich and diverse talent pool, so supporting the improvement of working conditions, keeping talent in the sector and championing career progression will help to future proof the success of the music industry.”

Claire Gevaux, Director of Programme, Help Musicians UK

“The UK’s performing arts are internationally renowned and part of a vibrant creative sector that employs one in 11 people across the country and is worth £101.5bn a year to the economy. We are home to outstanding talent and world-class artists and organisations producing innovative and inspiring work. None of this could happen without the hard work and commitment of all working in this sector, from those creating art to those supporting their work. By highlighting the challenges that parents and carers face in sustaining a career in the performing arts and what we can do to help, this timely report reminds us of our collective responsibility to better support them. If we want our sector to continue to thrive and be fairer and more inclusive, we cannot afford to miss this opportunity.”

Alistair Spalding, Artistic Director and Chief Executive, Sadler’s Wells

“PiPA’s work to evidence the impact of caring responsibilities on careers is vital for encouraging positive change in the theatre industry to make it a more inclusive working environment. The industry must now use the evidence from this report as a starting point for real action, putting policies and support networks in place to allow everyone the same opportunities for career development.”

Cassie Chadderton, Head of UK Theatre

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Parents and Carers in Performing Arts (PiPA) and the Department of Organizational Psychology at Birkbeck, University of London, set out to investigate the link between caring responsibilities and career progression in the performing arts to inform necessary steps for a collective approach to increasing business resilience by supporting the carer and parent workforce in the industry.**

## BACKGROUND

This Balancing Act Survey provides evidence that a shift is needed to enable parents and carers to continue fulfilling careers as part of an engaged sector which makes a substantial contribution to the UK economy. Supportive working practices and effective policy changes, which should also focus on freelancers, can help to ensure that the performing arts sector is reflective of UK society.

Just over 2,500 UK workers from the performing arts (including over 1,000 parents and carers), across music, theatre and dance (including on- and off-stage workers) gave up their time to provide valuable data and a unique insight into the industries in the Balancing Act Survey. This in-depth approach gathered robust quantitative and qualitative data benchmarked against available national data on earnings, work-life balance and other indices where available. Work in the performing arts has particular requirements that present unique challenges.

These include:

- Regular evening, weekend and bank holiday work.
- Last-minute recruitment practices which can involve location changes. Previous PiPA research found that the performing arts has a culture that disadvantages those with caring responsibilities. 76% of participants in the 2016 PiPA Best Practice Survey reported regular last-minute changes to scheduling.
- Long hours, particularly during weeks where rehearsals and training are combined with show times.
- Touring: including national and international tours for short and long periods.
- The set up and take down times of shows which include night time work.
- London-centric work opportunities.

The key findings are summarised below, followed by a review of current UK work practice, showing that families across all occupations are under strain, struggle to maintain work-life balance and face increasing job insecurity. The Balancing Act Survey shows that these challenges hold particularly true in the performing arts, and that parents and carers are disproportionately affected.



## PERFORMING ARTS INDUSTRY UNDER STRAIN

The research identified that the biggest single factor for survey participants leaving the performing arts is because current working practices are incompatible with, and too challenging to combine with, other roles in life. Of those who took part in the survey, but had left the industry, 43% identified caring responsibilities as the main contributing factor followed by low income and financial instability (40%).

## CAREER SACRIFICES AND PENALTIES

- The median earnings<sup>1</sup> for parents and carers are £20,000 per annum, **13% lower than for those without caring responsibilities** (£23,000).
- Median **earnings for parents and carers working freelance are lowest**, at £15,000, which is substantially lower than the estimated UK Living Wage (£17,550 or £20,572 in London).
- Earnings from the performing arts are **unlikely to cover expected outgoings for over a third of participants** and nearly twice as many said that earnings do not cover unexpected expenses. Parents and carers were also least likely to agree that their basic needs are being met by their earnings.
- Parents and carers seek proportionally **more work outside** the performing arts to boost their income. This in effect subsidises their careers more so than those without caring responsibilities. Overall, more than half of the participants were working in other fields to top up earnings.

Work in the performing arts is precarious, with one in three participants saying that they do not have a formal contract in place. Parents and carers are less likely to be in full-time employment (29% compared to 45% for those without caring responsibilities) and more likely to work part-time (17% versus 11%). They **sacrifice job security** and sufficient employment, as they are more likely to work freelance (58%) compared to those without caring responsibilities (48%).

Caring sacrifices were even more pronounced for women: more than 8 out of 10 women with caring responsibilities indicated that they either worked part-time or freelance, compared to 59% of other female participants. In contrast, the employment structure for men with caring responsibilities remained comparable to men without caring responsibilities.

## THE IMPACT ON PARENTS AND CARERS: UNDEREMPLOYMENT AND WORK-LIFE COMPROMISE

A benchmark comparison of relevant survey indices showed that participants are very engaged in their work, yet experience high job insecurity, low levels of work-life balance and very low levels of employability – a combination which is likely to lead to burnout and impaired well-being unless people are being supported to meet their needs. This is particularly so for parents and carers who juggle multiple responsibilities.

**Parents and carers are not working** in the **roles** for which they were **trained**, and they regularly forgo career opportunities. 37% of participants with caring responsibilities had changed their work **role** and 45% changed their work **location** because of caring-related issues. Reasons for changing jobs and locations include needing to economise on living and childcare costs, and a dearth of flexible work practices.

76% of parents and carers had to **turn down work** because of childcare responsibilities (even higher for women at 80%); 68% were unable to attend auditions and other opportunities. More freelance workers with caring responsibilities have had to turn down work (85%) than other workers. Yet, 40% of parents and carers would **prefer to boost their income** by working an additional two days per week.

These findings identify that parents and carers are under-employed yet given adequate support would be willing and able to work more. Although some working patterns, such as evening work, are difficult to shift, other work practices can be reviewed, such as schedule and casting changes and notices, childcare provision for auditions and meetings as well as leadership and management training in more flexible and family-friendly working styles.

## MAKING WORK 'WORK'

In terms of what helps parents and carers keep working, the data shows that 60% rely on support from family and partners, indicating significant social capital; less than 10% said that supportive employers and/ or colleagues had helped them working. The sector could benefit from a cultural shift towards supportive working which enables flexibility.

Participants indicated strong appetite for Shared Parental Leave. Only 10% have taken it, but over 60% would like to take it in the future – including 72% of the self-employed. It is likely that the financial cost of taking leave is too great at present, as are the logistics involved in applying, particularly for the self-employed.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings make a compelling case for action. This could include lobbying for better statistics on the performing arts and the self-employed more broadly, and a mandate to publish equal opportunities statistics. Policy changes could include provision and promotion of equal parental support structures for all employed and self-employed workers. Organisations could work towards increasing business resilience through the review and implementation of supportive work practices and robust evaluation to ensure continuous improvement of practice. The benefits of self-employment for those with caring responsibilities are the freedom, flexibility and choice of working patterns. However, the report identifies that the precarious nature of work combined with low wages are more likely to compel self-employed workers to accept unsatisfactory working conditions with negative financial and well-being consequences for themselves, their families and their dependents.

Further investigation into particularly vulnerable groups, including a focus on self-employed parents and carers, single parents, as well as those facing other forms of social exclusion would provide greater insight for the sector. Additionally, the impact of juggling multiple jobs and caring roles on health and well-being requires more in-depth analysis.

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# INTRODUCTION: THE CONTEXT FOR PIPA'S BALANCING ACT SURVEY

The United Kingdom's performing arts sector prides itself on ensuring that the arts are accessible and inclusive to all. The Arts Council England sets out five key goals including resilience and sustainability, an inclusive approach, and diversity and skills<sup>2</sup>. Such principles should - and can - be extended to all who work in the sector, whether their work takes place on- or off-stage. To what extent is the performing arts industry sufficiently inclusive and flexible to recognise and facilitate people's roles and responsibilities holistically, including any caring duties? This important question is at the heart of *Parents and Carers in Performing Arts* (PiPA's) mission to raise awareness, find creative solutions and promote best practice to support carers and parents<sup>3</sup>.

In 2016 PiPA undertook their first survey<sup>4</sup> into the challenges parents and carers face working on- and off-stage in theatre. This identified both organisational and behavioural barriers as more than 70% of performing arts workers with caring responsibilities turned down work at least once a month as a direct consequence of their caring duties. This was especially true of self-employed workers, where four out of five turned down work on a monthly basis due to caring responsibilities.

Against this background PiPA has conducted their second survey (the *Balancing Act Survey*), which is the industry's biggest ever survey of the impact of caring responsibilities on career progression in the performing arts across dance, music and theatre, for on- and off-stage workers including management and administrative roles. This was carried out in partnership with *Birkbeck, University of London*, funded by the *British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors*, *Help Musicians UK*, *Sadler's Wells* and *SOLT/ UK Theatre* with the aims of:

- Gathering up-to-date benchmark data on individuals with caring responsibilities; more specifically how they work, how much they earn and career progression, as well as their experiences of work-life balance.
- Investigating any barriers to inclusive work practices in the performing arts for those with caring responsibilities; and to find out why and how people are changing roles and leaving the industry.
- Identifying areas for further investigation and scrutiny, to inform policy formation and ultimately influence industry best practice.

The following sections are structured as follows. First, we set out the current data on contemporary families and trends in work practices more generally to provide context for the research. Next, detail on specific challenges in sector makes a case that the performing arts are under strain. The report then provides detail on the participants before setting out the costs and sacrifices associated with caring, the consequences in terms of talent drain and well-being, as well as what helps people to keep working.

## MODERN FAMILIES UNDER PRESSURE

In 2018, there are 7.5 million children living in UK working households and 1.3 million children living in workless households; children in single-parent families are ten times more likely to live in a workless household (36.3%) than children living in couple households (3.7%). The Modern Families Index paints a picture of families under pressure. A third of families surveyed do not have enough time or money for their family to thrive, with just under half stating that it has become difficult to bring up families financially; and nearly three quarters (75%) catching up with work outside work time. Parents identify flexible working as one of the best means to get better balance, but negative workplace attitudes and cultures as well as their job roles are a barrier to this balance<sup>5</sup>.

Carers UK state that 1 in 8 adults (around 6.5 million people) in the UK are caring for adults. By 2037, it's anticipated that this number will increase to 9 million. Over 1 million people care for more than one person and 72% of parents and carers responding to Carers UK's State of Caring Survey said they had suffered mental ill health as a result of caring<sup>6</sup>. A 2012 YouGov poll estimated that as many as 2.4 million people<sup>7</sup> in the UK are 'sandwich caring', which is combining multiple caring responsibilities such as young children and elderly relatives.

Work undertaken by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation demonstrates that two thirds of children in poverty live in a working family<sup>8</sup>. The solutions require policy changes such as a reform of Universal Credit and high quality flexible and part-time working as well as role modelling through flexibly working leadership at senior levels<sup>9</sup>. A recent study highlights greater control of working hours and better paid parents and carers' leave as well as good line management as the most effective interventions to support people to combine caring and working<sup>10</sup>. Empirical research concludes that good work-life balance practices reap benefit for organisations too, including better relationships at work, improved productivity and reduced turnover<sup>11</sup>. Despite this the UK Equal Lives report clearly shows that only 37% of female and male parents and carers think that they have the right balance between work and care<sup>12</sup>.

Shared Parental Leave gives the option for couples to care in the first year of their child's life by sharing up to 50 weeks of leave and 37 weeks of statutory pay between them. Yet uptake remains very low at about 2% (9,200 parents) in 2017<sup>13</sup>. One reason is the low pay rate at around £145 per week, which is economically not viable for many parents and one reason why a select number of employers now offer enhanced Shared Parental Leave packages<sup>14</sup>. Another likely reason is the increase in self-employed and gig economy workers, who are generally not eligible for statutory benefits following the birth or adoption of a child.



## WORKING PRACTICES IN THE UK

The Work Employment Relations Survey (WERS)<sup>15</sup>, an important UK benchmark, shows that flexible work practices have been common in the UK but that it also remains the case that flexible practices can be incompatible with operating hours or the nature of the work in any business. There is also no doubt that work is increasingly undertaken in the digital domain; yet UK research established that over half of organisations sampled do not have relevant work-life balance policies in place, or train and develop staff for the future of work<sup>16</sup>.

## THE GIG ECONOMY

The term 'gig economy' originated from the music industry and is now widely used to describe a labour market characterised by short term and/ or freelance work and an absence of permanent employment, job security and benefits. Many organisations avail themselves of a self-employed workforce, as this offers flexibility to upscale or downscale the number of people working at any time swiftly, without overheads such as national insurance, holiday pay, sick pay, maternity leave and so on. There have been several law cases which have tested the claims of 'gig workers' to the same rights as employees<sup>17</sup>.

## SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Self-employment is on the rise in the UK with this workforce now accounting for around 15% of the working population (4.8 million in total). There have been steep rises in the over 65s and young self-employed workers (under 24) and self-employed working on their own (4 million in total)<sup>18</sup>. There are different forms of self-employment including 'solo self-employment', freelancing (output focused), being driven to self-employment or 'insecure' self-employment<sup>19</sup>. UK policies for the self-employed focus on taxation and income, but little emphasis is on well-being. Yet, academic research shows that the self-employed can be happier at work than those in full-time employment, as they have more freedom to shape their jobs<sup>20</sup>. The self-employed are vital to the UK economy, as it is estimated that they helped boost job growth following the last global recession and are partly accountable for low levels of unemployment of 4% in 2018. Yet, it is difficult to estimate the income of the self-employed as any data is largely dependent on surveys. The Office of National Statistics data from 2017 shows that the distribution of income for the self-employed is centred at about £240 on average per week, compared to the employed with around £400 per week. Median income for the full-time self-employed has increased from £276 to £347 while for the part-time self-employed it rose from £98 to £150 (between 2001-2016). However, these increases are negligible taking into account the cost of inflation.

## WORKING CONDITIONS AND HEALTH

The issues outlined above have implications on the working conditions and health of workers. Data from the European Working Conditions Survey – a representative sample of nearly 44,000 workers from 35 European countries – showed that in 2015 11% of workers in the UK were not satisfied with their working conditions<sup>21</sup>. Key factors are considerable working pressure and intensity, with 23% of workers working under high pressure all of the time; 39% working under tight deadlines all of the time; and 34% feeling they did not always have enough time to complete their tasks. These were generally higher than the European average – which was 23%, 27% and 27% respectively. In addition, 33% felt that they had the skills to do more demanding work while 13% would like to work more hours, which suggests that a significant proportion of the UK workforce feel they are being under-employed. Overall, 21% of the UK sample also reported having difficulty making ends meet. These working conditions have implications for workers' well-being, as 21% of UK participants stated that work had a negative impact on their health and well-being. Similarly, 18% indicated that their health or safety was at risk due to work. Crucially, both these statistics were 14% in 2010, suggesting that more UK workers now feel that their health is more compromised by work than before.

## ARE THE ISSUES DIFFERENT FOR WOMEN?

The 2015 HM Treasury report *Fixing the Foundations* included the core priority to get more people into work whose skills are underused - including women and disabled people. The female employment rate remains around 10% lower than for men (68.6% versus 78.3%)<sup>22</sup>. These figures do not tell us what work people do, or how much they earn, but we can say that employment patterns differ substantially between women and men. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has estimated that more equal labour distribution would increase the GDP by 10% in 2030<sup>23</sup>. Yet, structural barriers persist. A survey undertaken by the UK Department for Education and Skills showed that 54% of workless mothers would go out to work if only flexible and affordable childcare was available<sup>24</sup>. More current data on how the extended free provision of childcare from age three onwards has changed these perceptions is not available at the time of writing, but it can be surmised that this leaves a crucial childcare gap for those with young toddlers. Young mothers under the age of 25 are a particularly vulnerable group; they struggle financially, find formal childcare prohibitively expensive and are more likely to live in poverty, with a quarter turning to the use of foodbanks. Solutions to these issues are to extend free childcare provision, a more enabling and more readily accessible benefit system, and extending the Living Wage to those under 25<sup>25</sup>.

## THE CHALLENGES IN THE PERFORMING ARTS

In the UK, *The Performing Arts Blueprint* estimated the annual economic contribution of the performing arts as over £25 billion per annum<sup>26</sup>. The report stated that there were 5,480 businesses and 101,593 people working in the performing arts industry, of which at least 34% work on stage; they reported 94% of the industry as white, and 49% as female. In terms of the employment profile, they estimated 58% as self-employed (compared to 13% in the UK economy as a whole), 35% in part-time work (25% UK overall) and 6% from BAME minorities (9% UK average). An oversupply of educated talent was benchmarked by 44% of the workforce having degrees or professional diplomas. Earnings did not reflect this educational profile, as 73% were estimated to earn less than £20,000 per annum.

The 2017 *Theatre Offstage Workforce Review*<sup>27</sup> identified industry specific challenges including low remuneration, overwork and partiality towards existing contacts for opportunities, antiquated organisational culture and a lack of workplace flexibility and opportunities for professional training and development. In contrast, there is compelling evidence from other sectors to suggest the implementation of 'high performance work practices', where people are empowered, trained, offered flexible working and taken care of with appropriate human resource management reaps considerable human and financial benefits, as people perform better and organisations are more productive<sup>28</sup>.

## THE DEMANDS OF CREATIVE WORK

Work in the performing arts has unique work challenges and demands. These include:

- a) Regular evening, weekend and bank holiday work.
- b) Long hours.
- c) Last minute engagement and changes to schedules.
- d) Touring and frequent location changes.
- e) Intense preparation, rehearsal and/ or training time.
- f) Irregular working patterns
- g) The performing arts rely on the creativity of personnel involved as the content and nature of the work is unique. Creative people need time to develop ideas, develop themselves and develop their art through practice.
- h) Psychological research demonstrates clearly that people are more creative when they are happy<sup>29</sup>. In contrast negative moods including feeling anxious and fearful are linked to lower creativity but this is also dependent on the type of creative work which people are doing<sup>30</sup>.
- i) The stresses inherent in performing: performers routinely report performance anxiety at varying levels. Research shows that highly evaluative contexts, where people are judged more strongly, decrease creative performance<sup>31</sup>.

The 2016 PiPA Best Practice Survey found that the performing arts has a culture that disadvantages those with caring responsibilities through the practice of last-minute engagements where 76% of reported regular last-minute changes to scheduling.



## IN SUMMARY

Precarious work is becoming increasingly common in the UK. Parents, carers and women experience underemployment, due to barriers including the unavailability of affordable childcare, which has a negative effect on people's health. Although the performing arts come with unique work demands, they offer unique opportunities for creative work to be enjoyed by wide audiences. These observations provide a strong impetus for asking those working in the arts directly about their experiences.

# THE BALANCING ACT SURVEY

PiPA collected the data in 2018 with support from their partnership network through a voluntary internet survey. Additional detail on the survey structure and the participant profile is provided in the last two report sections including full breakdowns by sector. This shows that the samples differed slightly between the industries, as for instance in Music and Dance a fifth of participants were in lecturing/ teaching roles, which was not so for the Theatre sample. Likewise, the participants for Dance included more administrative roles than for the other two sectors and conversely fewer performing artists. Please note that numbers varied across questions as not all could be answered by each participant, and not everyone completed the entire survey.

## WHO TOOK PART? THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

There were 2,551 participants; 397 from Dance, 551 from Music and 1,603 from Theatre. There were 582 on-stage and 1,885 off-stage workers. For the Music industry, participants from 22 different job roles took part, for Theatre participants from 26 different roles and for Dance participants from 21 roles. 68% of participants were female and 30% were male (2% non-binary or not stated). Just under half (47%) were married; 94% identified as white; over 80% educated to at least Bachelor's degree level. The average age was 38 years, 1,046 participants had children under 18 years (on average 1.6 children, compared to UK average of 1.7). Almost half of the participants identified that their primary place of work was London which is consistent with industry data..

### Where is your primary place of work?

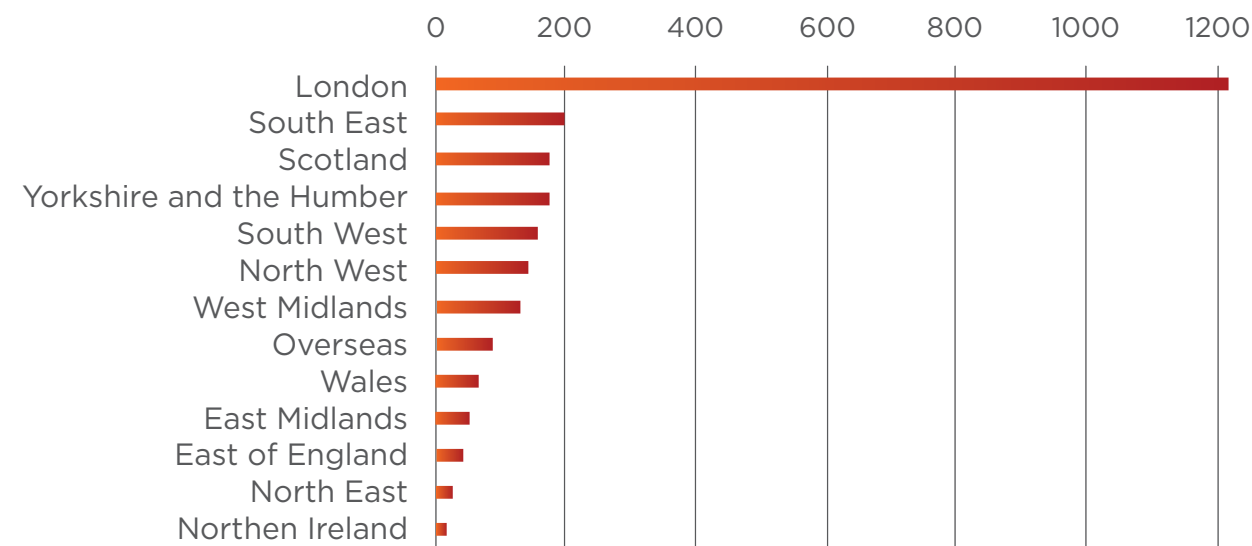


Figure 1: Participants' primary place of work

The majority (54%), worked freelance, regardless of job role or caring status, compared to 15% self-employed in the overall UK workforce in 2018.

## Employment type

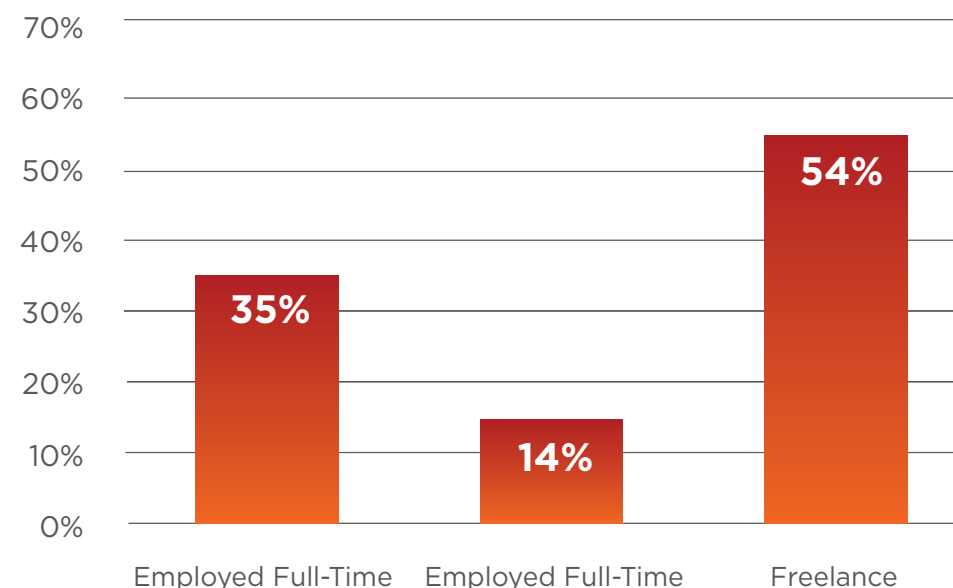


Figure 2: Participants' employment types

Roughly 8% of participants indicated that they held multiple contract types. The majority of these participants balanced contracted work alongside freelancing. Participants also took on work outside of the performing arts, with people spending an average of 18% of their working time in other industries. Overall, more than half of the participants were working in other areas, with 53% of participants spending more than 10% of their work time outside of the performing arts industry.

Although the workforce is highly educated, portfolio working is standard in the performing arts, characterised by freelance and part-time ways of working; holding multiple jobs; and having to find work outside the performing arts.

# THE PERFORMING ARTS UNDER STRAIN

The survey collected data on earnings and ways of working to enable comparison between different types of employment.

## EARNINGS

At first sight, the earnings of workers in the performing arts compared favourably with earnings of those in other sectors. The median<sup>32</sup> earnings of full-time employed participants were £30,000 per year, compared to a UK national median of £27,600. The UK Living Wage is £9.00 per hour, with a higher rate of £10.55<sup>33</sup> for London translating to an annual full-time salary of £17,550, or £20,572 in London. The median average across all participants, including fixed-term and freelance workers, was £21,500 boosted to median earnings of £25,000 through other work. Participants who work part-time had median earnings of £18,000.

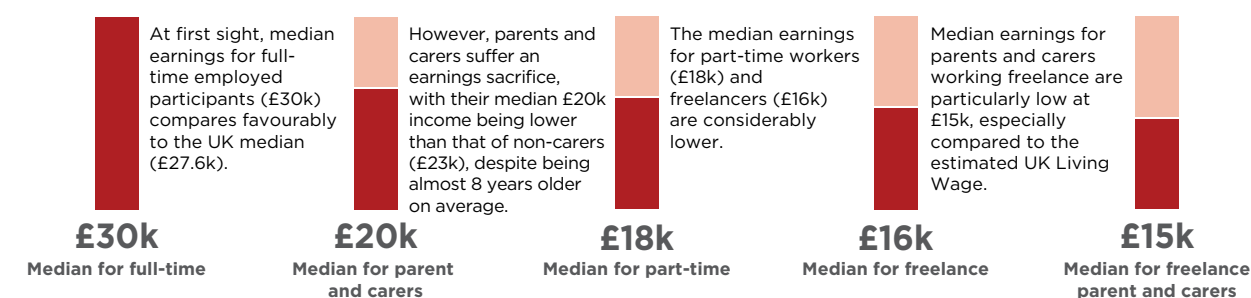


Figure 3: Differences in earnings

We also compared earnings for different roles. For off-stage workers, 43% work full-time and 16% part-time, 45% freelance, with median earnings of £24,500. For on-stage workers, the percentage of freelancers is staggering as 84% work in this way, 11% full-time, and 9% part-time; median earnings are only £12,000 per annum.

Median earnings	Overall	Full-Time	Part-Time	Freelance
Performing arts work only	£21,500	£30,000	£18,000	£16,000
All personal income	£25,000	£32,000	£21,000	£20,000

Table 1: Median earnings for participants

The **median earnings for freelancers were £16,000** per year, **boosted by another 25%** to £20,000 from non-performing arts work.



## THE DEMANDS OF A PERFORMING ARTS CAREER

We asked all participants about their biggest personal challenges in their performing arts career:

### What is your biggest Challenge?

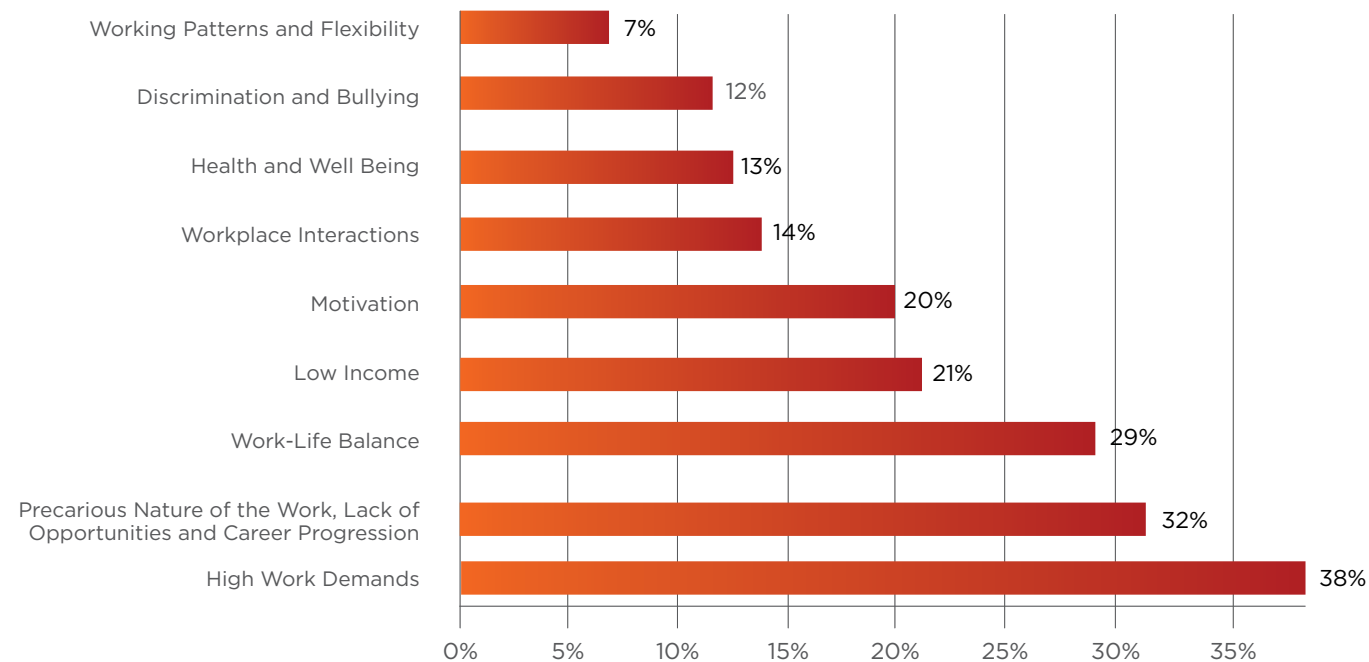


Figure 4: The biggest challenge in the performing arts

- 38%** of responses highlighted the **high work demands**, including long working hours, the difficulty to manage changeable hours and schedules, high workloads and unrealistic pressures.
- 32% stressed **the precarious nature of the work, the lack of opportunities, roles and career progression**.
- 29% told of struggles combining a functional work-life balance with work in the performing arts, even more so for parents and carers.
- 21% underlined **low income**, underfunding and lack of fair pay.
- 20% commented on the need to **motivate** from **within**, having to compromise on ambitions and how self-confidence takes constant hits.
- 14% pointed to the importance of workplace interactions including the vital role of support networks, but also highlighting a lack of skills in leaders and managers.
- 13% say that **health and well-being suffered**, including fatigue and exhaustion.
- 12% point to **discrimination** and **bullying** on grounds of gender, professional group, age and other protected characteristics.
- Last but not least, 7% mentioned work patterns and that flexibility is expected from workers, but not necessarily reciprocated by employers.

Many of these challenges proved severe enough for participants to leave the industry. Although it was hard for our survey to reach industry leavers, we nevertheless included an open question about people's reasons for leaving as shown below; 68 individuals provided a response.

### What are the reasons for you leaving the industry?

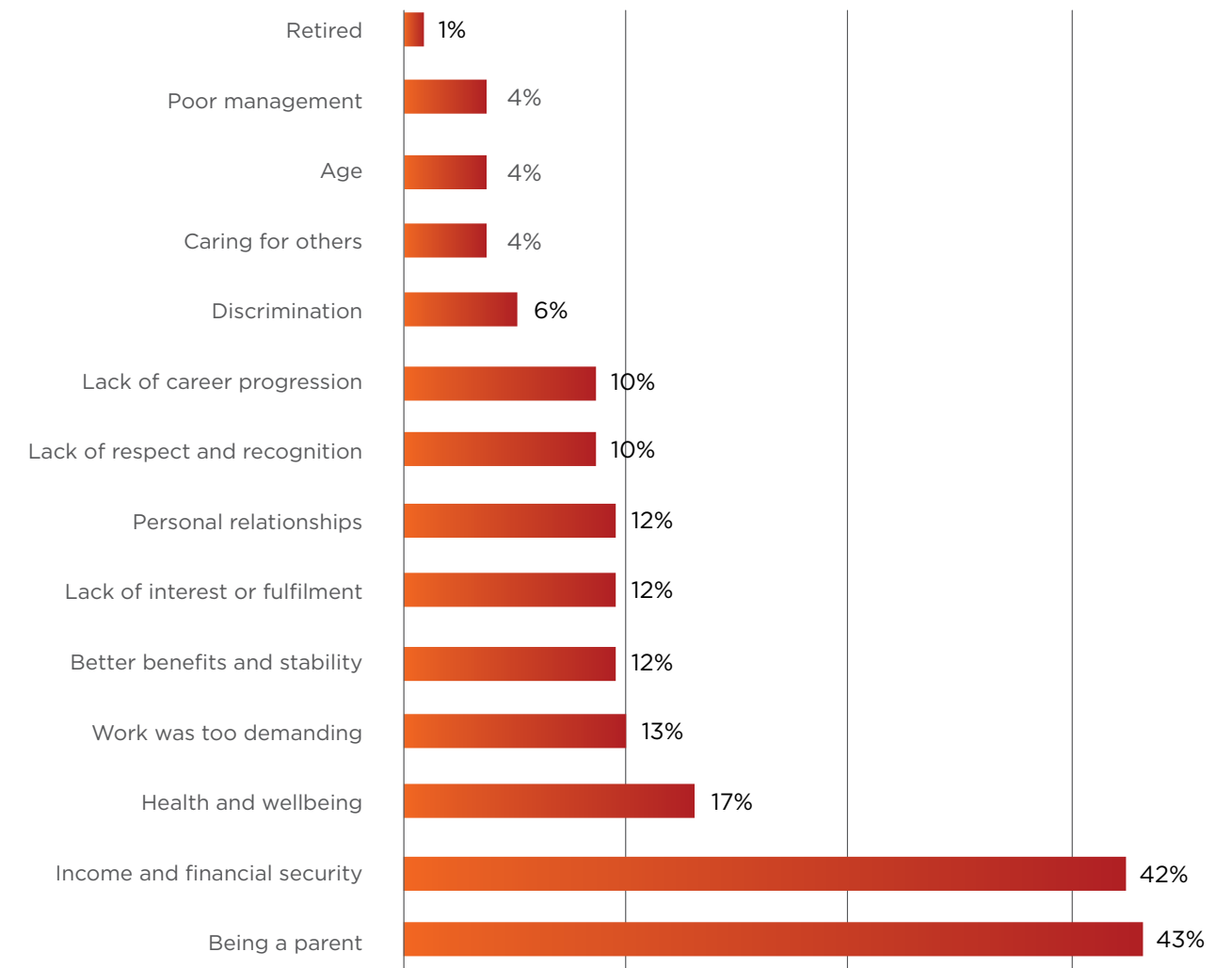


Figure 5: Reasons for leaving the performing arts

The data show that being a parent was the biggest push factor at 43%, followed by lack of income and financial stability (42%), other significant factors were negative impacts on health and well-being and not being given the opportunities to undertake interesting and fulfilling work.

Asked for **one piece of advice** that current workers would give to someone starting out, over 1,500 participants provided answers, with those most frequently cited being the need to:

- build a financial safety net as well as the importance of additional part-time jobs outside of the performing arts to supplement income (17%);
- build relationships (18%)
- take care of one's own learning and development (15%). Participants also commented that to have a career in the performing arts, one needs a real love for the work (12%) as well as a strong work ethic (11%).



# CAREER SACRIFICES AND PENALTIES

This survey identified that parents and carers report career and salary sacrifices in order to fulfil their caring responsibilities. They also struggle to access career opportunities as those working in the performing arts rely on other income to pursue their careers and are more likely to give up performance work once they become parents.

## PARENTS AND CARERS WORKING PART-TIME OR FREELANCE

Comparing the 1,151 participants with caring responsibilities with the 894 participants without such responsibilities shows that parents and carers were far more likely to be self-employed/freelance or part-time and far less likely to be in full-time employment.

Employment Type	With caring resp. (n = 1,151)		Without caring resp. (n = 894)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Employed Full-Time	333	28.93	405	45.30
Employed Part-Time	199	17.29	95	10.63
Employed Fixed term	8	0.70	50	5.59
Self-Employed / Freelancer	673	58.47	427	47.76
Unemployed / Not in work	18	1.56	12	1.34
On parental leave	36	3.13	1	0.11
On sick leave	2	0.17	3	0.34

Table 2: Participants' types of employment (Comparing parents and carers with non-carers)

Of all parents and carers surveyed here, 58% work freelance (compared to UK average of 15% overall, and 24% in the creative industries), compared to 48% of those without caring responsibilities. Parents and carers were more likely to work freelance or part-time (17% versus 11%) and less likely to work full-time (29% compared to 45%).

Of the participants who indicated that they had caring responsibilities, 68% were female and 31% were male, which is comparable to the overall participant profile. Taking on caring responsibilities appears to be linked to a shift from full-time employment to part-time and freelance work.

## Work type compared across caring responsibility

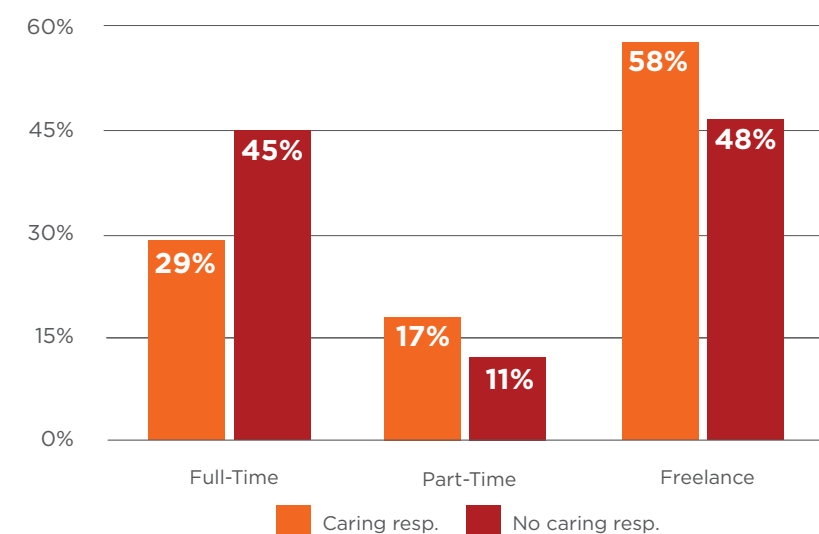


Figure 6: Participants' types of employment (Comparing those with and without caring responsibilities)

This was particularly pronounced for the female participants, with 81% of women with caring responsibilities indicating that they either worked part-time or freelance, compared to 59% of women who do not have caring responsibilities as the figures below illustrate. This is a strong indication of underemployment for women with caring responsibilities.

## Female employment across caring responsibility

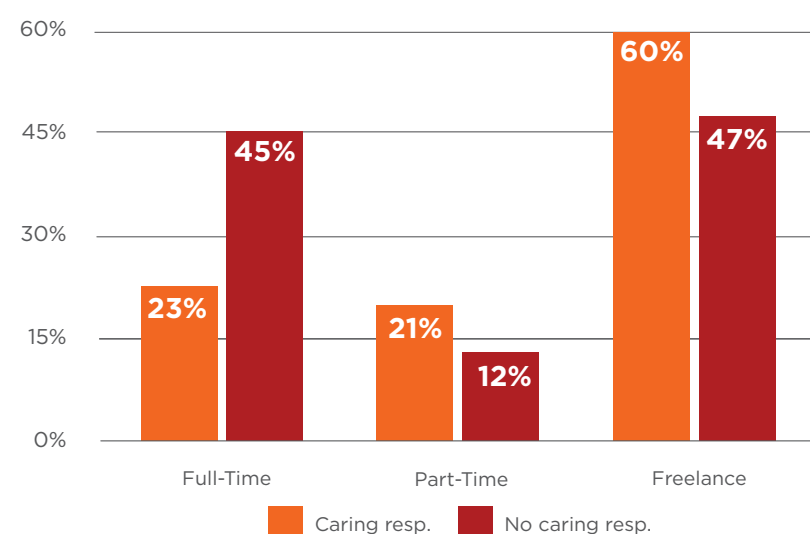


Figure 7: Female participants' types of employment (Comparing those with and without caring responsibilities)

Fewer females with caring responsibilities held full-time contracts than expected by probability; whereas more females with caring responsibilities do part-time or freelance work than expected. Although this trend also appears consistent for men, the number in each employment category (full-time, part-time or freelance) was not significantly affected by whether or not they have caring responsibilities.

## Male employment across caring responsibility

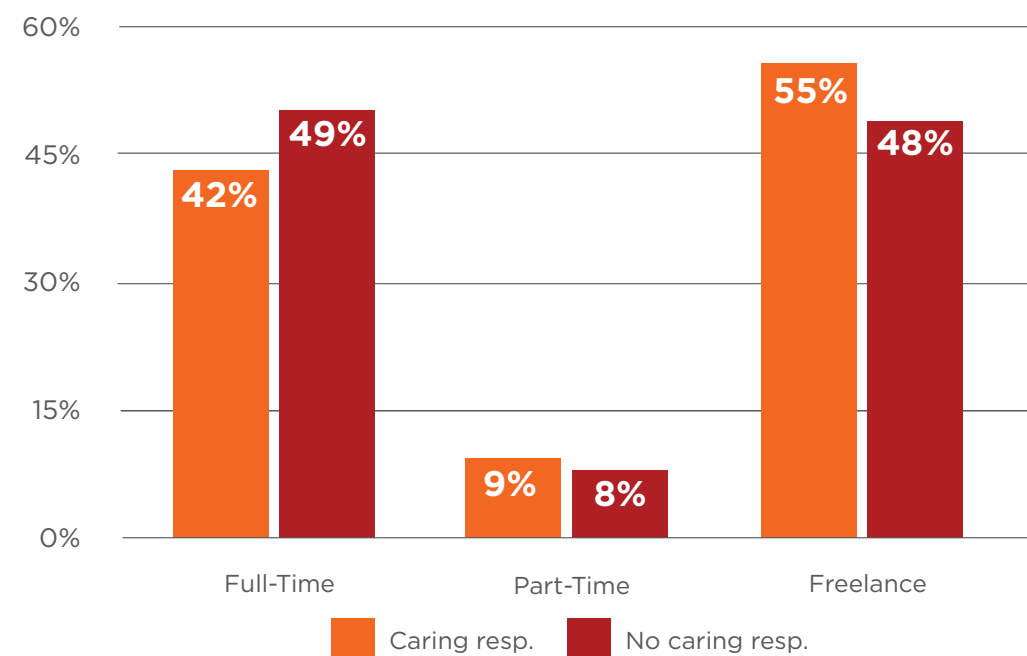


Figure 8: Male participants' types of employment (Comparing those with and without caring responsibilities)

A detailed comparison shows that earnings differ by caring responsibilities: the median earnings for parents and carers are £20,000, which is just above the Living Wage (in London). It is also lower than the median of £23,000 for those without caring responsibilities.

The figures also show that parents and carers who work freelance (58%, so well over half) have a particularly low income at £15,000, which is £5,000 less than the estimated UK Living Wage for London; this income is then supplemented through work from outside the performing arts.

Median earnings	Overall	Caring resp.	No caring resp.
Performing arts work only	£21,500	£20,000	£23,000
All personal income	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000

Table 3: Comparing those with and without caring responsibilities

Median earnings	All	Parents and carers			No caring responsibility		
		Full-time	Part-time	Freelance	Full-time	Part-time	Freelance
Performing arts work only	£21,500	£35,000	£18,500	£15,000	£28,000	£15,000	£18,000
All personal income	£25,000	£37,000	£22,000	£20,000	£29,000	£19,250	£20,750

Table 4: Comparison personal and household income of those with and without caring responsibilities

The table above shows that once additional work from outside the performing arts is taken into account, parents and carers and those without caring responsibility have the same median earnings (£25,000). Parents and carers working in the performing arts therefore have to find even more work outside the industry in order to boost their income. Parents and carers rely proportionally more heavily on their partners income as the difference between personal median earnings and median household income is £25,000; for those without caring responsibilities this gap is almost half at £13,000. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that single parents are likely to encounter even more financial insecurity and barriers to actively taking employment.

## ARE PARTICIPANTS EARNING ENOUGH TO COVER THEIR NEEDS?

We asked participants to indicate how often their earnings cover typical and unexpected expenses to get an indication to what extent these meet economic need. The figure below outlines to what extent income from only performing arts work covers typical/ regular outgoings and unexpected expenses.

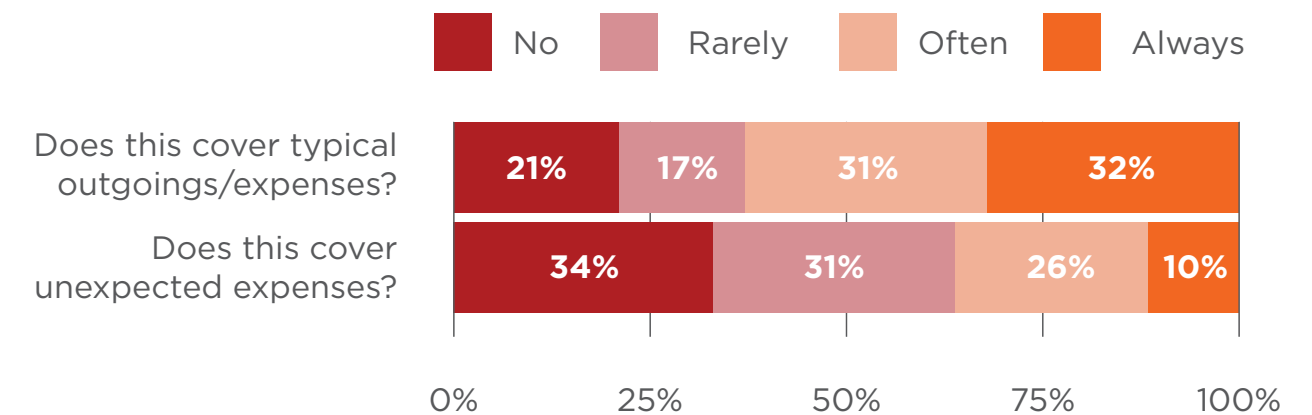


Figure 9: Do earnings from the performing arts cover typical and unexpected spending?

38% of participants said that their wages never or rarely cover **typical** outgoings. 65% of participants stated that their earnings never or rarely covered **unexpected** expenses. More parents and carers than those without caring responsibilities indicated that their earnings were not sufficient to cover routine expenses and unexpected costs.

The qualitative data indicates that the cost of out of hours and short notice childcare was a particular concern for participants.

Perceptions were considerably more favourable once other income from outside the performing arts was considered also; with 76% of participants agreeing that the income meets typical outgoings; and 45% agreed that it also meets unexpected expenses.

"I'm a single parent and have sole responsibility for childcare. I have to take time off work or work back hours to make up time for ongoing illness of my child [...]. I have no support. I have 4 jobs and it's really difficult to manage this alongside childcare. Instability and don't earn enough money to live on working in performance as a professional costume designer/ maker and educator."

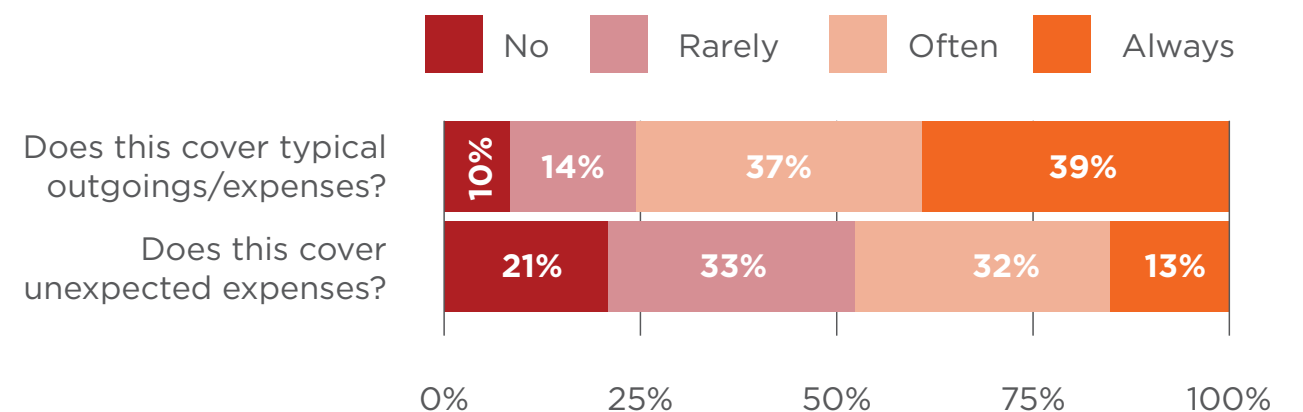


Figure 10: Does total personal income cover typical and unexpected spending?

In summary, earnings do not cover economic needs and put parents and carers in a vulnerable position with regards to covering unexpected expenses, meaning that parents and carers rely on other earnings and sources of income and support to sustain their careers. While childcare remains a common challenge for parents in other industries too; the issues here are the long and irregular working hours and last-minute schedule changes, which make access to any childcare much more difficult and expensive, if not impossible. In this context, it is worth noting that in 2016 the Actors' Children's Trust, provided £271,047 worth of grants, to 156 families, jumping to £420,246 to 317 families in the first part of 2018 until September.

The findings indicate that a median personal income of £25,000 is needed in the performing arts. Most workers are not able to earn enough from the performing arts, and have to top up their income through other avenues. Career sacrifice is evident among parents and carers as they do not earn as much from the performing arts and therefore have to earn more from other types of work.

Patricia Okenwa - Photo by Alex Rumford

## CHALLENGES FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

We asked parents and carers about the biggest challenges which they experience in terms of trying to 'make work in the performing arts work'. In total, 1,171 answers were coded to give an overview of the personal challenges which parents and carers face.

### Biggest challenges for parents and carers

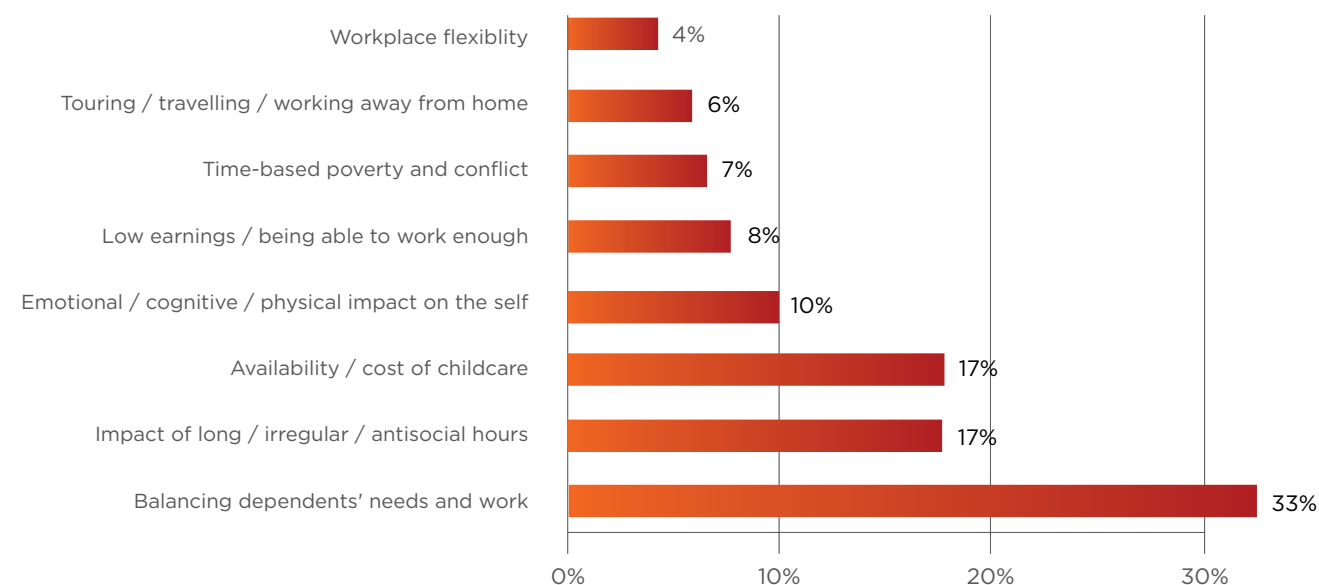


Figure 11: Biggest challenge for parents and carers

The biggest challenge reported was balancing the needs of dependents with the demands of work (33%), followed by the impact of long irregular hours (17%) and the availability and cost of childcare (17%). These are illustrated in the following quotes:

The issue of juggling childcare between parents also links to the previous observation that women experience career sacrifices by resorting to part-time work:

"My husband works as a West End company manager so his work is changeable. There are weeks when he is in rehearsals and therefore we need childcare from 7am until 6pm on the days I work. And then he goes into performance mode so we only need childcare from 3pm - 6pm. It's difficult to get a childminder/nursery to swop about and change the times. I only work part-time so we are lucky in respect of this only being needed three times a week."

"When both my wife and I work full time, we struggle to find additional childcare to top up our 3 days a week (outside of school hours) that we normally use. Unexpected changes to schedules, expectations of late working, and expectation of additional work outside of normal working hours is most intrusive, unsettling and undermining in our aims to be present and available for our children."



The impact of the **long, irregular, antisocial hours** is a huge challenge, as it makes the organisation of childcare more difficult, if not impossible. The **availability and cost of childcare** is inevitably bound up with this juggling act as the key issues are:

- a) Unsociable hours, for which appropriate, affordable childcare is not available
- b) Ad hoc auditions, last-minute cast or schedule changes.
- c) Lack of emergency child/ elder-care when dependants/ children get ill.
- d) Reliance on personal contacts and networks, and the difficulties faced when these are not there, or break down.

Over 7% of responses illustrated **time poverty** which results in lack of opportunity to prepare or practise for work. Whether as a Dancer, Musician, Director or Choreographer there is a need and expectation that performing arts workers are prepared and able to maintain their skills to professional standards. A lack on ongoing maintenance can result in a critical loss of confidence or even skill that can be the difference between securing a job and maintaining a career or not:

"I teach 4 days a week and have to then come home and look after the kids on my own because of my husband's work. I am often too tired to practise [my instrument] properly when the children are in bed or mindful of waking them. I frequently have to pay someone to look after the children to practise [...]. I also have to find time to visit my poorly mother in a home nearby and be ready to rush to the hospital when she has an emergency."

A lack of **workplace flexibility** (4%) was a key concern and these issues are even more pronounced for those who **tour and travel**. The cost of is the time and quality of time spent with the family, the opportunity to network and for professional opportunities; as illustrated here by a performing artist:

"Touring was a struggle. I didn't want to travel or be away from home but my work demanded it. The guilt that I carried every single day until my son went to university."

Not only is there an impact on the family, but there is also an impact on the individual, as the theme of **emotional/ cognitive/ physical impact** on the self (10%) shows. Here, the effort involved in juggling work in the performing arts often means that people feel less well and also less creative, included the following impact:

- a) Emotional: guilt, sadness, regret in particular on missing out on the 'small things', such as regular bed times when children are younger, sports or school events.
- b) Cognitive: not being able to concentrate on either the art or the family due to preoccupation with constant juggling of work and family.
- c) Physical: constant tiredness and sleep deprivation feature strongly here.

Several participants stressed that they do not have the time or resources to do 'self-care' by taking time out, exercising, or having a social life.

There is a paradox especially for performing artists who need space to remain spontaneous and creative. It is also particular to the performing arts that a level of preparation outside core working hours is part of many roles, and it is important to individuals to be able to dedicate sufficient time to this.



Some of the challenges are comparable to what parents experience in other industries, including long working hours as full-time employees in the UK spend the highest number of hours per week at work compared to other European countries<sup>34</sup>. Others are specific to the performing arts, such as the schedules and issues around touring.

On one hand there is inflexibility in meeting the needs of parents and carers, while on the other side there is an expectation that unpredictability and changes are simply part of the job. Turning down opportunities then leads to career sacrifice by foregoing stage work for other, less well paid, local work.

Most of the challenges raised by parents and carers revolve around their caring responsibilities and how that intersected with their work demands and interests. Yet many of the issues identified are beyond the control of the individual. This means that if workers are not able to carry on with these challenges, then the only remaining option would be to start transitioning away from the performing arts.

“[As a Dancer]  
Keeping fit and active  
myself - professional  
development - having  
the time to write grant  
applications, having the  
time to train, apply for  
work etc.”

# THE IMPACT ON PARENTS AND CARERS: UNDEREMPLOYMENT AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Given the challenges highlighted above by those with caring responsibilities, it is not surprising that many of them struggle with underemployment, or that they are having to make changes to career structure with regards to the type and location of work.

## UNDEREMPLOYMENT

**The survey data gives a strong indication for underemployment, as 40% of parents and carers would like to increase their working hours by an additional two days of work per week. Based on the median income (across all participants, from performing arts work only) of £21,500, this would add an estimated £160 to weekly earnings.**

More than three quarters of participants with caring responsibilities reported turning down work due to childcare responsibilities – this was particularly prevalent for female participants and freelancers. The majority of participants also reported missing auditions or interviews because of lack of childcare.

### Have you turned down work due to caring responsibilities?

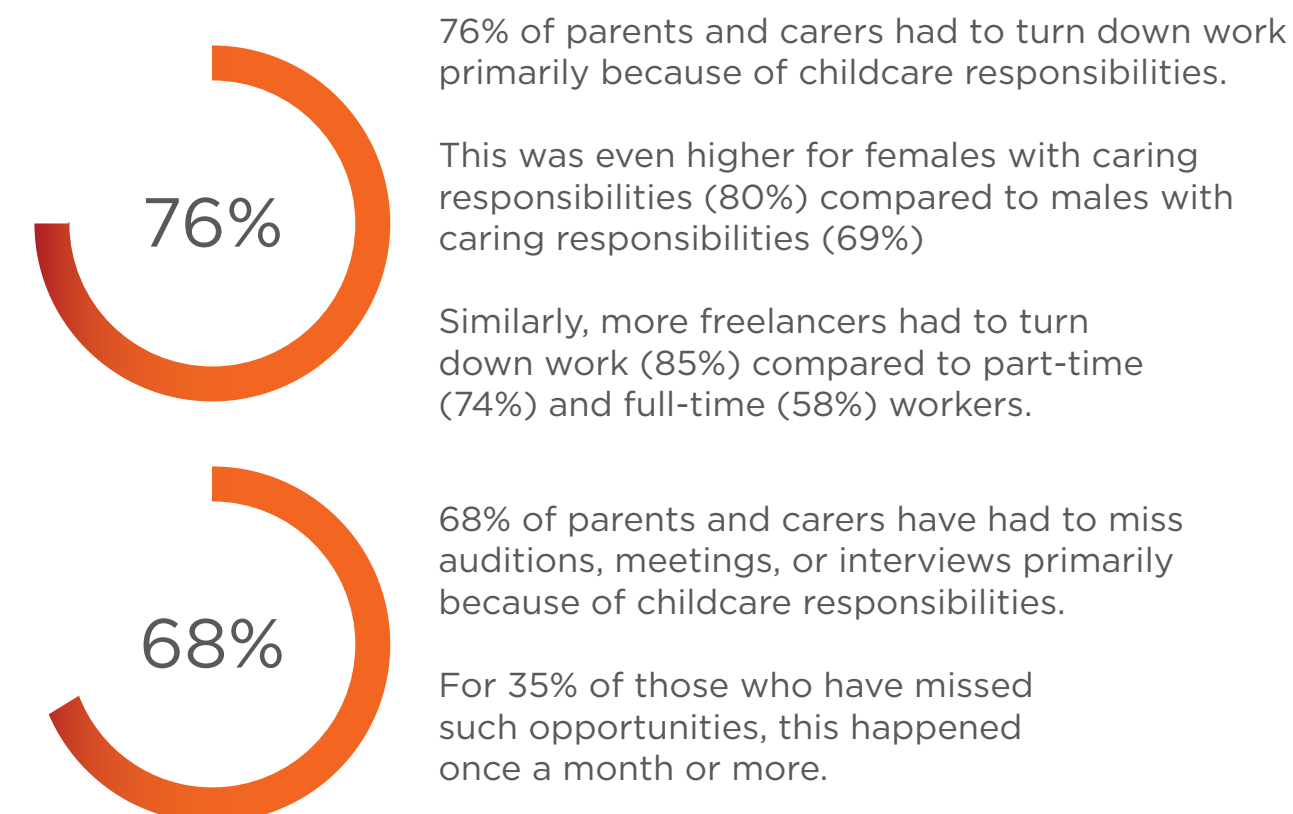


Figure 12: Underemployment among parents and carers



## PARENTS AND CARERS NOT WORKING IN EXPECTED ROLES

Further analysis revealed that parents and carers frequently change job roles and locations. 37% of participants with caring responsibilities had changed their work role and 45% changed their work location because of caring related issues. Notable differences were that 50% of females with caring responsibilities said that they had to change their work location because of childcare responsibilities compared to 36% of men. 44% of women, versus 23% of men, had changed their work role due to caring responsibilities.

### LACK OF TRAINING PROVISION

Of those who had changed roles, 19% agreed that they received adequate training, and 21% agreed that they received adequate support as shown below.

#### “Did you receive adequate training and support?”

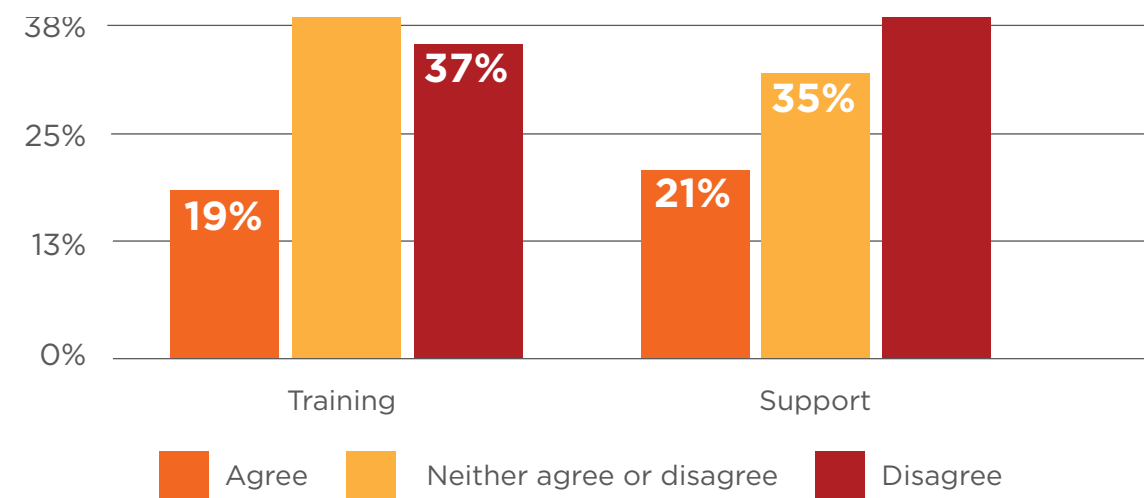


Figure 13: Receiving adequate training and support following a role change

While observations from other industries also point to a lack of career opportunities for working parents, as about a third of women resort to part-time working and men are twice as likely to be promoted once they are parents than women<sup>35</sup>, this issue is unique in the performing arts, as participants are changing roles and locations, with little training or support. The qualitative data also showed that on- and off-stage workers miss out on touring opportunities or intensive production runs due to the logistic challenges.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PARENTS AND CARERS CHANGE ROLES?

We asked those who said that they had changed location or role to provide us with further detail. In total, we coded 328 responses (some participants provided more than one). The results point to talent drain as 17% provided comments which made explicit mention that they missed out on opportunities once they became parents because of complex challenges. This includes being passed over on opportunities by agents or prospective employers, or not being able to take work because it is too far away or because it involves touring:

“Needed a permanent job in order to afford full time childcare, needed full time childcare in order to be available for work. Felt I was missing out on my family due to long hours and no longer felt comfortable with travelling away from them. Once my eldest son started school our family life became less flexible and my wages could not support additional travel and ad-hoc childcare any longer.”

A tenth of participants had changed job location for a variety of reasons. The most frequent reason was to take on more local work to save on commuting and to work closer to home:

“I can’t make it to auditions most of the time. When cast I need my mum to come over from abroad to be there for the kids. So now I work part-time in theatre in education because it’s local and low hours.”

Some also moved home to be closer to family and save on living costs (particularly those living in the South East of England). Flexible working (5%), job shares (5%) and ‘informal accommodation’ (e.g. through ad hoc arrangements with colleagues) were not common. Finally, 8% either left their job permanently or temporarily (6%), or were made redundant (2%):

Another 17% reported they were working increasingly from home while 16% changed their job role. This includes those who moved to more administrative or off-stage roles:

“I was a dancer and continued to tour during my child’s first year. It was just about manageable but I decided to move into dance related roles that did not involve touring such as producing, rehearsal directing in London and teaching.”

“When my son was one year old I returned to work after maternity to an admin role. Maintaining that job and nursery childcare was completely impossible and I was forced to leave a job and a company that I loved a great deal. I nannied for 18 months at that point with no training and no further support for that job, before returning to arts administration when my son qualified for 15hrs free childcare at three years old.”

## AT WHAT COST DOES THE SHOW GO ON? INSECURITY AND EMPLOYABILITY

There are high expectations about dedication and consistently high performance for performing arts workers. The following sections outline how such expectation and practices impact on individuals who report being highly engaged and absorbed in their jobs, yet stressed and insecure about their roles and what the future might hold.

### A DEDICATED WORKFORCE

Participants reported higher than average levels of engagement. However, work-life balance is lower than in comparable data in other industries and other countries<sup>36</sup>. We also observed very low levels of employability (where nearly 60% say that they would find it hard to get a similar job if they lost their current job). Additionally, well over half disagreed that they had either adequate promotion prospects or adequate income.

### JOB (IN-)SECURITY AND EMPLOYABILITY

We asked all participants what they thought the likelihood was of a potential job loss. Nearly one in five participants (23%) agreed with this statement, which is higher than the 13% reported by those from the national UK sample from the sixth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS). A freelance workforce by definition experiences greater job insecurity and we have to consider this when analysing these data. That does not however minimise the impact of the insecurity on personal well-being or balancing caring responsibilities and work.

#### “I might lose my job in the next 6 months”

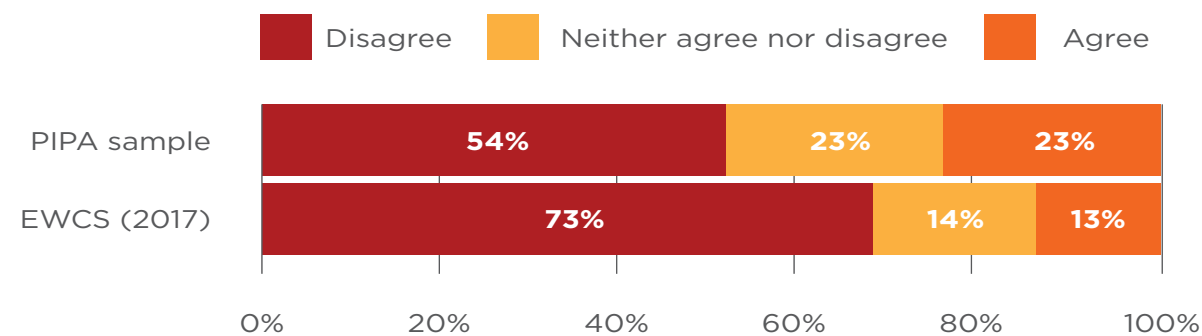


Figure 14: Job insecurity (Comparison against national UK average)

The survey also revealed low levels of employability, as approximately, only one in five participants (22%) believed that it would be easy to find another job of similar earnings, compared to 1 in 2 in the UK national response in the EWCS.

## “If I were to lose or quit my current job, it would be easy for me to find a job with a similar salary”

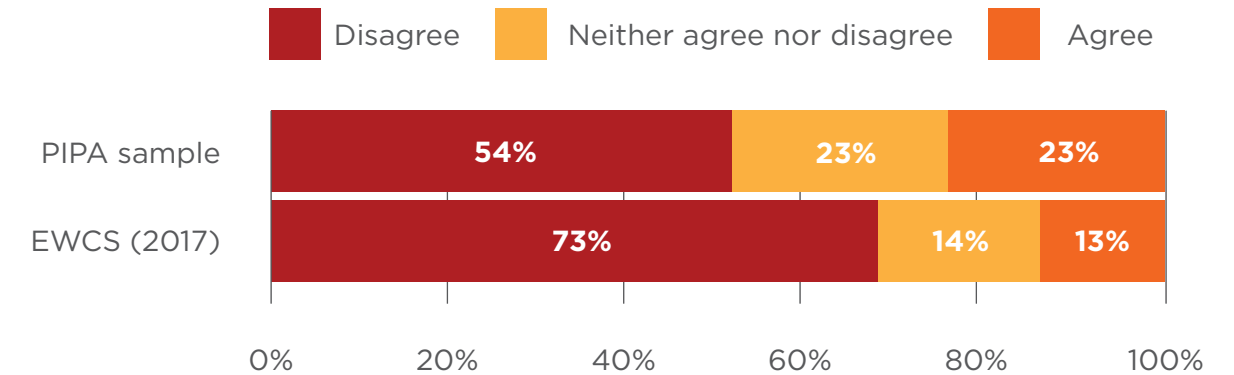


Figure 15: Employability (Comparison against national UK average)

The comparison between parents and carers and those without caring responsibilities shows that parents and carers were least likely, out of all the groups, to think that they are employable with only 16% saying that they could find a job with similar earnings.

## “If I were to lose or quit my current job, it would be easy for me to find a job with a similar salary”

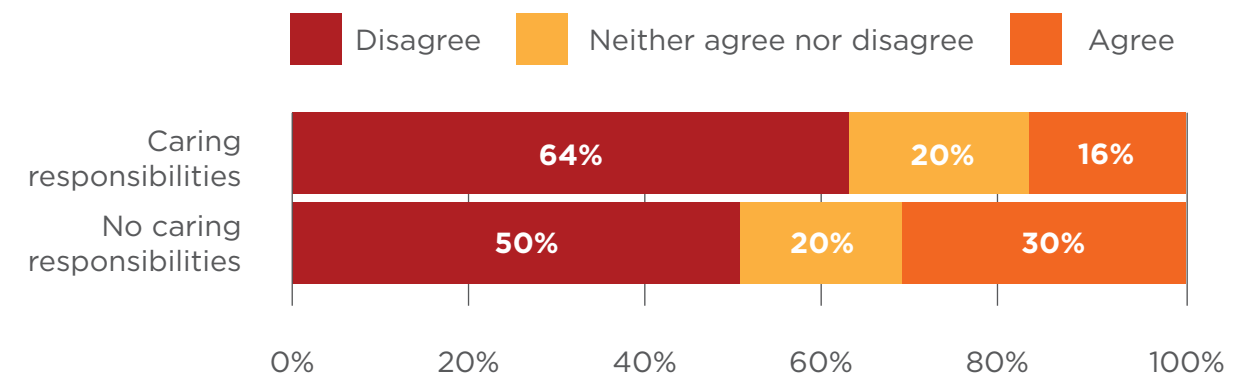


Figure 16: Employability (Comparison of respondents with and without caring responsibilities)

The data show that participants in the performing arts are highly engaged and absorbed in the work, yet experience stress and insecurity about future employment. This is a potential danger to well-being, as burnout and impaired psychological and physical health are likely, which in turn impacts functioning in other roles including as a parent and carer. In addition, parents and carers are less likely to report that they could find similar jobs in the performing arts should they lose their current one and are more likely to think that their job is at risk compared to benchmark data, indicating that caring responsibilities heighten anxiety about job security.

## WHO DOES THE CARING?

The survey also considered who does the caring – the ‘second shift’<sup>37</sup>, as research tells us that women’s earning potential takes a big hit where household roles are shaped by traditional gender role orientations<sup>38</sup>. We compared the percentage of childcare done by males and females. This shows that women indicate that they are twice as likely to pick up the majority of the caring work.

### % Childcare done by you : by your partner

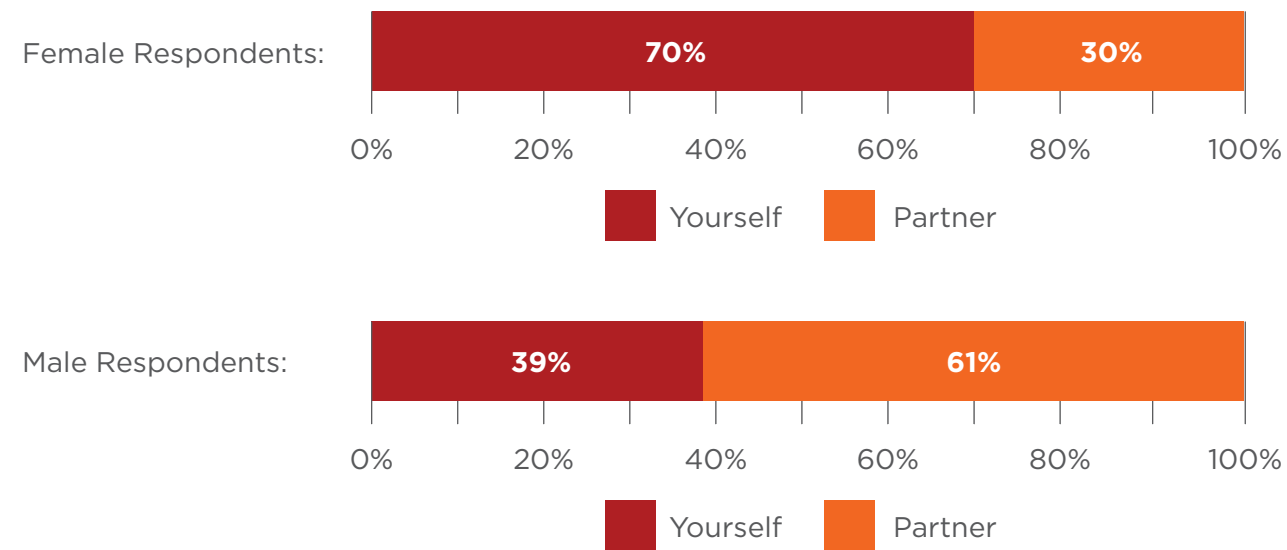


Figure 17: Caring responsibilities (by gender)

Furthermore, 79% of female participants reported that they were the primary carer (i.e. they did more than 50% of the work), but only 16% of the male participants would say the same

### For parents and carers living with a partner...

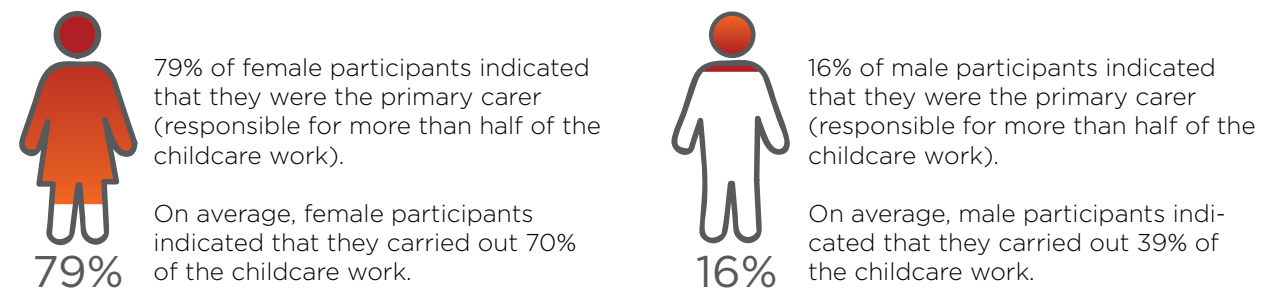


Figure 18: Caring responsibilities (by gender)

## MAKING WORK ‘WORK’

We asked all parents and carers to let us know what helps them continue working. We had 628 answers to this question. The data shows that 60% rely on a support network outside work; demonstrating that social capital outside work is a key enabler. Other important factors, although not nearly as highly rated, are support from the workplace and changing work structures and roles.

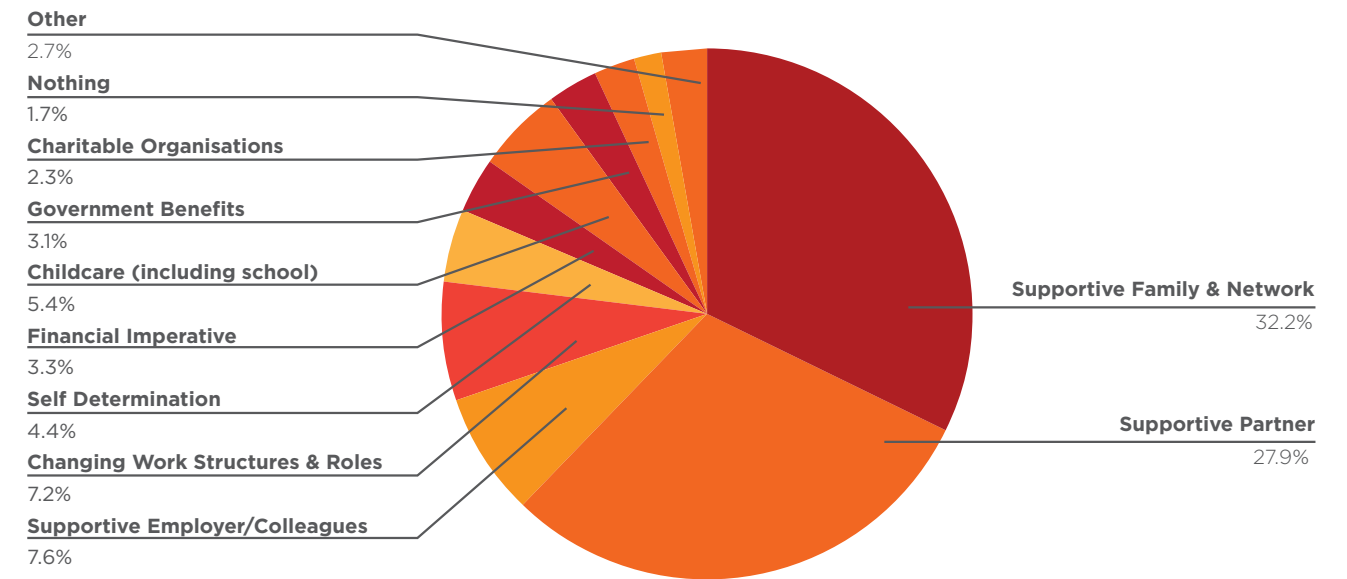


Figure 19: Types of support needed to continue working

Participants indicated that they benefit when both sources of support, work and family networks, come together.

“Supportive partner who does 50% of childcare and housework. Supportive colleagues who enable flexible working and job sharing.”

In the event that their regular childcare solution is unexpectedly unavailable, 65% would have to take time off work, or needed friends and family to step in. Taking time off work is a significant risk for working parents and carers, given how likely they are to be self-employed. If self-employed parents and carers do not work, then they are likely to forsake earnings for the period missed entirely.

## SUPPORTIVE WORK PRACTICES

In terms of family friendly working practices provided by employers, 40% of participants reported that they had no options at all. One in four benefited from either work from home or working more flexibly. Crèche provision was very low at 1%, as was emergency childcare.

### Family Friendly Support Provided by Employer

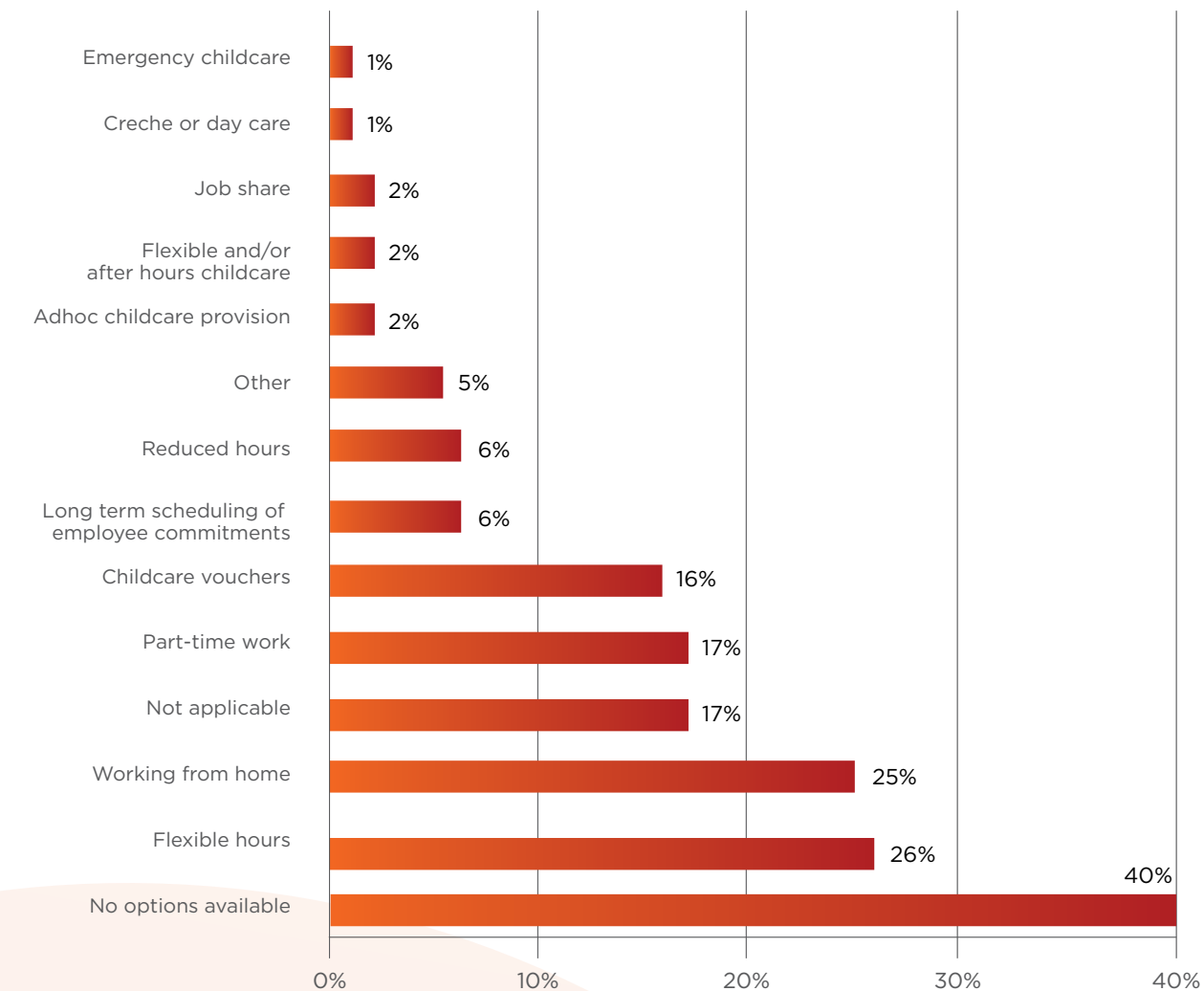


Figure 20: Types of family friendly support provided by employer



## PARENTAL LEAVE AND BENEFITS

The appetite for Shared Parental Leave for freelancers indicated that males would like to take an equal role but are currently not in a position to do so; potentially because the economic impact is too great.

Although only 10% *had* taken Shared Parental Leave, over 60% of those who are employed would *like* to take it, and 72% of those who are self-employed would take it in the future.

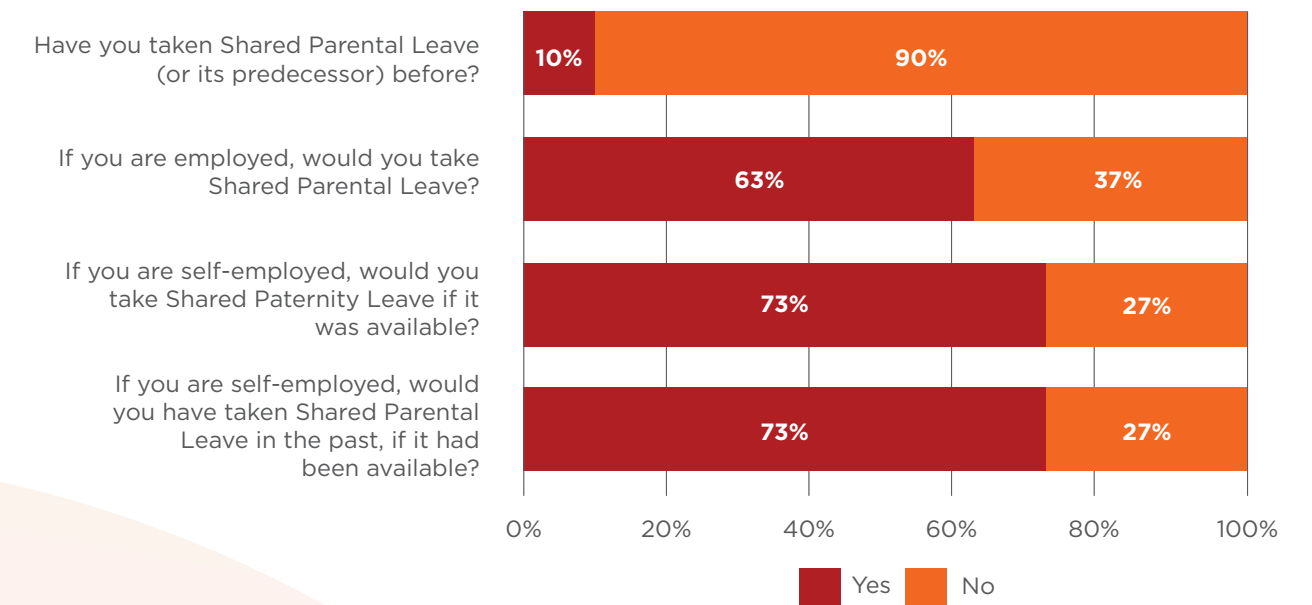


Figure 21: Interest in Shared Parental Leave





74% of males said they would like to access Shared Parental Leave, compared to 72% of females as illustrated below.

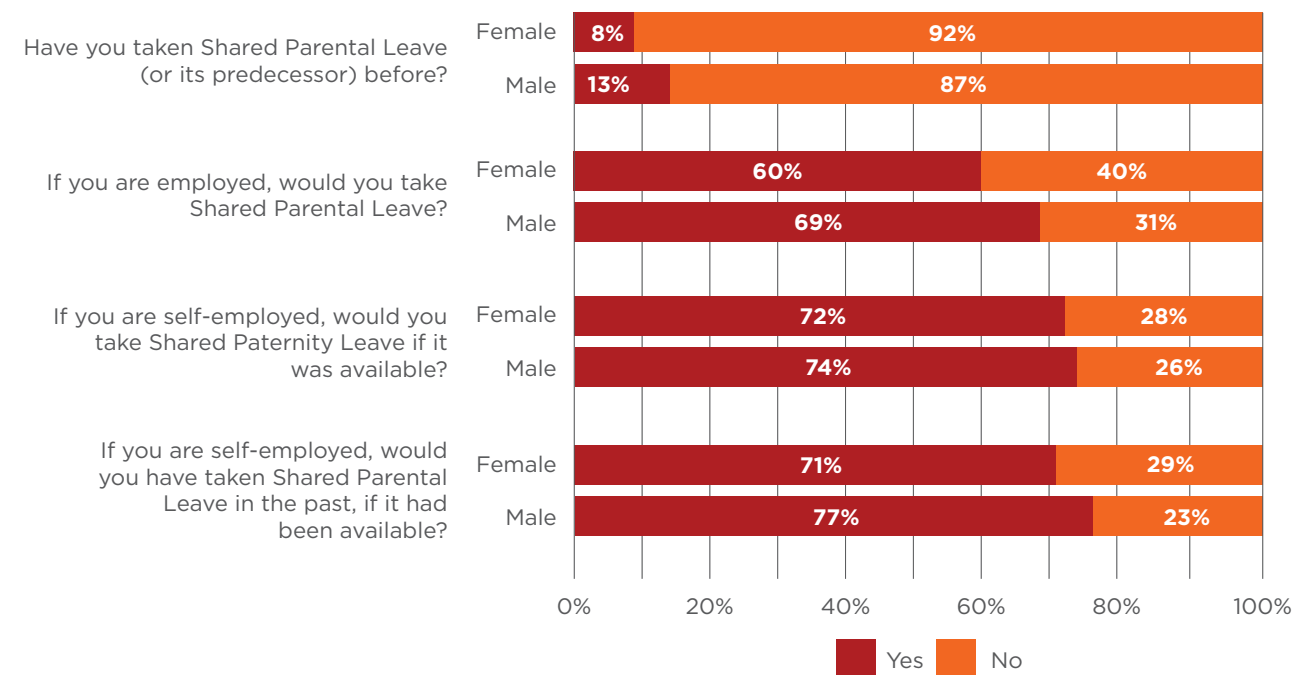


Figure 22: Interest in Shared Parental Leave (comparison by gender)

This suggests that for some, increased access to benefits may result in an increase in shared caring responsibility.

# SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the *Balancing Act Survey* show that unpredictable working patterns in the performing arts have a significant impact on parents and carers. People **leave** the performing arts because working practices are incompatible and too challenging to combine with other roles in life: **becoming a parent was the biggest push factor** for 43% of participants, followed by a lack of income and financial stability (42%). The findings highlighted that **parents and carers earn less on average due to a combination of factors. They are more likely to resort to less secure work structures** such as part-time and self-employed working where earnings are lower and **unlikely to cover expected outgoings**. Parents and carers therefore have to seek proportionally *more* work outside the performing arts to boost their income. This in effect subsidises their careers more so than those without caring responsibilities. Overall, more than half of the participants were working in other areas. The self-employment model can bring benefits such as greater flexibility and engagement due to increased control. However, further investigation would be beneficial to the sector to gain understanding of the impact of managing caring responsibilities with a self-employed career in the performing arts. **Caring sacrifices** were more pronounced for **women** who were even more likely to work part-time or to be self-employed. UK data shows that women’s work structures alter more once they have caring responsibilities compared to men, the data here demonstrates that the performing arts also have tolerated gendered ways of working.

## THE IMPACT ON PARENTS AND CARERS: UNDEREMPLOYMENT AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The findings point to an underutilisation and loss of talent. Parents and carers are not **working in the roles** which they were trained in as participants with caring responsibilities change their work *role* and *location* because of caring related issues. Yet parents and carers would like to work an additional two days per week to boost their income and meet economic needs. This presents a paradox given that parents and carers say they forego career opportunities by turning down work and opportunities. Freelancers with caring responsibilities are most likely to turn down work than other workers. The survey demonstrates high levels of **engagement** which is an asset to the sector. **But combined with high job insecurity, low levels of work-life balance and very low levels of employability this is a potentially worrying combination** which can lead to burnout and impaired well-being. Targeted support mechanisms, which may require training of managers and leaders, would buffer this and should encompass parents and carers who juggle multiple responsibilities.

## WHAT HELPS PARENTS AND CARERS WORK?

Participants rely on their own social capital by enlisting support from partners and family; and some report supportive employers and colleagues. The sector could benefit from a cultural shift towards sustainable, flexible and inclusive work practices including increased availability of Shared Parental Leave.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

The industry could benefit from high performing work practices which are inclusive of parents and carers. The right leadership and management capacity, as well as more supportive work structures will be key to achieving this to build capacity for sustainable ways of working. This research highlights an opportunity for further investigation and engagement.

## POLICY

- Introduction of equal opportunities monitoring of carers and parents by arts organisations, to be reviewed on an annual basis in order to benchmark progress.
- Lobbying for better data collection on the self-employed that includes the performing arts workforce by the UK government (through the ONS) as well as organisations such as Arts Council England.

## ORGANISATIONAL

- Organisations review policies and working practices, in-line with the PiPA Best Practice Charter, to adopt a flexible approach to recruitment, management and development of all staff, for both freelance and employed workers.
- Employers and industry bodies collaborate with PiPA to establish career development opportunities for carers and parents returning to work, through training, mentoring and return to work programmes.

## RESEARCH

The data indicates that follow up research in the following areas would be beneficial for the sector, investigating:

- The impact on parents and carers managing multiple work roles, interrogating push and pull factors for changing roles and/ or locations and leaving the industry. A holistic perspective including partners, children and other sources of social support would be beneficial.
- How a more family friendly industry would attract and retain talent from more diverse backgrounds and/ or vulnerable groups such as single parents.
- Deep rooted influences which inhibit culture change in the performing arts industry.

# GLOSSARY

**Caring:** providing care and support which is not part of a paid job role. This includes helping with household duties and organisational tasks, as well as providing emotional back up and support.

**Caring responsibilities:** caring for dependents including children and/ or adults.

**Family-friendly policies:** policies introduced to support employees to better balance work and caring responsibilities (e.g. workplace crèche, financial support for childcare).

**Flexible working:** the UK government definition is a way of working which suits an employee's needs, with flexible time and space arrangements as appropriate, e.g. job sharing, condensed hours, or flexible start and end times<sup>39</sup>. All employees have a right to request flexible working after 26 weeks with the same employer who then has to consider a business case.

**Gig economy:** way of working marked by flexibility, unpredictability and absence of permanent contracts and employee benefits.

**Mean:** average number.

**Median earnings:** this is the mid-point in a range of earnings. We used the median, rather than the mean (=average) as average earnings are distorted by very high and very low earners.

**Participants:** people who responded to the PiPA survey; note that actual numbers vary across the results as for instance some questions could only be answered by carers and parents; some participants also did not complete the entire survey.

**Self-employed:** a person is deemed self-employed if they are running their business and take responsibility for success and day to day operations, including filing tax returns, insurance and so on. Workers can hold self-employed and employed status (where an employer is responsible for PAYE etc.) simultaneously<sup>40</sup>.

**Statutory Shared Parental Leave and Pay:** a legal entitlement for eligible parents of babies or children placed for adoption where parents can share up to 50 weeks of leave and up to 37 weeks of pay between them in various configurations<sup>41</sup>.

**Work-life balance:** the perception that work and other areas in life can be reconciled in line with one's current life priorities.

**Work-family conflict:** a term from the research literature which describes how the demands of different roles can interfere with each other.

**Work-family enrichment:** a term from the research literature which describes how undertaking different roles can have positive and boosting effects.

**Underemployment:** where people are willing to work more hours than they currently are or working in jobs which do not reflect their education or economic need.

**Universal credit:** payment to help individuals with living costs which will replace other benefit schemes, including child tax credit, housing benefit, income support, working tax credit.

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METHODOLOGY FOR THE PIPA  
BALANCING ACT SURVEY

The PiPA *Balancing Act* Survey was undertaken by specialists from Birkbeck, University of London’s Department of Organizational Psychology in partnership with PiPA. The team developed a bespoke survey questionnaire incorporating quantitative benchmark questions about earnings, benefits, household income, job security, employability, work-life balance and well-being.

It also invited qualitative responses from survey participants to identify challenges and existing support systems which enabled participants to continue working in the performing arts, and any reasons for leaving the sector.

This survey was shared online in June and July 2018 to target employed workers and freelancers, on- and off-stage across dance, music and theatre. It was promoted through PiPA’s partner network as well as in the industry press.

This snowballing approach means that whilst we offer rich and unprecedented insights into people working in the performing arts, we cannot claim that the sample (the people who participated) is representative of all roles across music, theatre and dance. That said, the survey also identifies that the data trends hold true regardless of the industry, so identifies common factors. As we observed a wide range in earnings, we have used median earnings (the mid-point), rather than mean (average) earnings, to reflect a more representative picture of the industry as a whole, and minimise the potential for distortion that a low number of high earners might exert on the data set.

The survey also included established questions from the research literature about work-life balance, job security and well-being; the research team benchmarked the results against previous studies where this was possible, as little, if any, data is available on employment statistics at a national level.

We had data from over 2,500 people working in the performing arts, including those with and without caring responsibilities that enabled a comparison between these groups. Comparisons were also made by employment status, given that PiPA’s previous research had identified the self-employed as a particularly vulnerable group. A full analysis of how the data might vary by job roles is beyond the scope of the current report as over 70 different roles across music, theatre and dance were included; further analysis will be reported in future updates. We also recognise as a limitation that there is likely to be a margin of error in people’s estimated annual earnings; and that how income is processed and taxed may be different for those who are self-employed and run earnings through a company.

The question format varied where some questions required concrete answers (e.g. the actual earnings); some had a ‘yes/ no’ format to allow follow up questions to be targeted; and some questions asked participants to agree on a scale (e.g. various levels of agreement or disagreement).

The analysis consisted of mean, median and other statistical comparisons; the data from the open question was coded with thematic analysis to group the data into distinct themes. The report includes both the coded quantitative and qualitative data, illustrated with quotations from the participants.

For further detail on the benchmarking data, including a full technical appendix of more detailed data tables, please contact Professor Almuth McDowall, [a.mcdowall@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:a.mcdowall@bbk.ac.uk).

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SURVEY PARTICIPANTS’  
PROFILE

Note that not all total responses on questions will add to 100%. This is either because numbers were rounded or due to multiple coding.

PARTICIPANTS BY INDUSTRY

	Overall	Music	Theatre	Dance
Responses	2,551	551	1,603	397
Average age	38.35	43.02	36.80	38.24
Gender				
Female	1,737 (68.3%)	313 (56.9%)	1,114 (69.7%)	310 (78.7%)
Male	771 (30.3%)	231 (42.0%)	462 (28.9%)	78 (19.8%)
Intersex	5 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)	4 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Prefer not to say	29 (1.1%)	5 (0.9%)	18 (1.1%)	6 (1.5%)
Transgender	21 (0.9%)	5 (1.1%)	13 (0.9%)	3 (0.9%)
Marital status				
Single	600 (23.6%)	70 (12.7%)	435 (27.2%)	95 (24.0%)
Married	1,190 (46.8%)	346 (63.0%)	666 (41.7%)	178 (44.9%)
Civil partnership	17 (0.7%)	1 (0.2%)	11 (0.7%)	5 (1.3%)
Living with partner	569 (22.4%)	83 (15.1%)	390 (24.4%)	96 (24.2%)
Divorced	77 (3.0%)	24 (4.4%)	44 (2.8%)	9 (2.3%)
Widowed	15 (0.6%)	8 (1.5%)	6 (0.4%)	1 (0.3%)
Separated	40 (1.6%)	10 (1.8%)	22 (1.4%)	8 (2.0%)
Engaged	3 (0.1%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (0.2%)	0 (0.0%)
Prefer not to say	30 (1.2%)	7 (1.3%)	19 (1.2%)	4 (1.0%)
Academic qualification				
GCSE	77 (3.0%)	22 (4.0%)	46 (2.9%)	9 (2.3%)
A-Level	146 (5.7%)	32 (5.8%)	94 (5.9%)	20 (5.0%)
Vocational (e.g. NVQ)	248 (9.7%)	41 (7.5%)	173 (10.8%)	34 (8.6%)
Bachelor’s degree	1,390 (54.6%)	275 (50.0%)	929 (58.0%)	186 (46.9%)
Master’s degree	609 (23.9%)	156 (28.4%)	325 (20.3%)	128 (32.2%)
Doctorate degree	53 (2.1%)	18 (3.3%)	20 (1.2%)	15 (3.8%)
None of the above	25 (1.0%)	6 (1.1%)	14 (0.9%)	5 (1.3%)
Ethnicity				
Bangladeshi	1 (0.04%)	1 (0.18%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)
Indian	13 (0.51%)	1 (0.18%)	7 (0.44%)	5 (1.26%)
Pakistani	2 (0.08%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.06%)	1 (0.25%)
British Asian	14 (0.55%)	4 (0.73%)	6 (0.38%)	4 (1.01%)
Other Asian background	7 (0.27%)	2 (0.36%)	1 (0.06%)	4 (1.01%)

participants by industry continued	Overall	Music	Theatre	Dance
Other Asian background	7 (0.27%)	2 (0.36%)	1 (0.06%)	4 (1.01%)
African	19 (0.75%)	4 (0.73%)	8 (0.50%)	7 (1.76%)
Caribbean	9 (0.35%)	3 (0.55%)	3 (0.19%)	3 (0.76%)
Black British	34 (1.34%)	4 (0.73%)	21 (1.31%)	9 (2.27%)
Other Black background	3 (0.12%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (0.06%)	2 (0.50%)
Chinese	4 (0.16%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (0.19%)	1 (0.25%)
British Chinese	4 (0.16%)	1 (0.18%)	1 (0.06%)	2 (0.50%)
Other Chinese background	3 (0.12%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (0.19%)	0 (0.00%)
White British	1,931 (75.84%)	420 (76.50%)	1,265 (79.06%)	246 (61.96%)
White European	334 (13.12%)	76 (13.84%)	181 (11.31%)	77 (19.40%)
White Non-European	55 (2.16%)	18 (3.28%)	31 (1.94%)	6 (1.51%)
Other White background	66 (2.59%)	14 (2.55%)	39 (2.44%)	13 (3.27%)
Other mixed background	69 (2.71%)	12 (2.19%)	42 (2.63%)	15 (3.78%)
Any other background	76 (2.99%)	22 (4.01%)	40 (2.50%)	14 (3.53%)
Prefer not to say	30 (1.18%)	6 (1.09%)	17 (1.06%)	7 (1.76%)
Multiple categories	110 (4.32%)	34 (6.19%)	57 (3.56%)	19 (4.79%)

DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS BY CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

	Overall	With Caring responsibility	Without caring responsibility
Responses	2,551	1,152	897
Average age	38.35	41.59	33.86
Gender			
Female	1,737 (68.3%)	778 (67.7%)	629 (70.4%)
Male	771 (30.3%)	356 (31.0%)	249 (27.9%)
Intersex	5 (0.2%)	3 (0.3%)	2 (0.2%)
Prefer not to say	29 (1.1%)	12 (1.0%)	13 (1.5%)
Transgender	21 (0.9%)	7 (0.7%)	12 (1.5%)
Industry			
Music	551 (21.6%)	328 (28.5%)	103 (11.5%)
Theatre	1,603 (62.8%)	643 (55.8%)	651 (72.6%)
Dance	397 (15.6%)	181 (15.7%)	143 (15.9%)
Marital status			
Single	600 (23.6%)	69 (6.0%)	406 (45.4%)
Married	1,190 (46.8%)	784 (68.2%)	182 (20.4%)
Civil partnership	17 (0.7%)	6 (0.5%)	6 (0.7%)

	Overall	With Caring responsibility	Without caring responsibility
Living with partner	569 (22.4%)	198 (17.2%)	258 (28.9%)
Divorced	77 (3.0%)	41 (3.6%)	21 (2.4%)
Widowed	15 (0.6%)	10 (0.9%)	4 (0.4%)
Separated	40 (1.6%)	29 (2.5%)	4 (0.4%)
Engaged	3 (0.1%)	1 (0.1%)	2 (0.2%)
Prefer not to say	30 (1.2%)	12 (1.0%)	10 (1.1%)
Academic qualification			
GCSE	77 (3.0%)	37 (3.2%)	15 (1.7%)
A-Level	146 (5.7%)	57 (4.9%)	51 (5.7%)
Vocational (e.g. NVQ)	248 (9.7%)	121 (10.5%)	79 (8.8%)
Bachelor's degree	1,390 (54.6%)	588 (51.0%)	540 (60.3%)
Master's degree	609 (23.9%)	316 (27.4%)	187 (20.9%)
Doctorate degree	53 (2.1%)	23 (2.0%)	18 (2.0%)
None of the above	25 (1.0%)	10 (0.9%)	6 (0.7%)
Ethnicity			
Bangladeshi	1 (0.04%)	1 (0.09%)	0 (0.00%)
Indian	13 (0.51%)	4 (0.35%)	3 (0.33%)
Pakistani	2 (0.08%)	1 (0.09%)	1 (0.11%)
British Asian	14 (0.55%)	7 (0.61%)	4 (0.45%)
Other Asian background	7 (0.27%)	3 (0.26%)	2 (0.22%)
African	19 (0.75%)	9 (0.78%)	7 (0.78%)
Caribbean	9 (0.35%)	4 (0.35%)	4 (0.45%)
Black British	34 (1.34%)	14 (1.22%)	11 (1.23%)
Other Black background	3 (0.12%)	1 (0.09%)	1 (0.11%)
Chinese	4 (0.16%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (0.33%)
British Chinese	4 (0.16%)	3 (0.26%)	1 (0.11%)
Other Chinese background	3 (0.12%)	1 (0.09%)	2 (0.22%)
White British	1,931 (75.84%)	876 (76.17%)	676 (75.45%)
White European	334 (13.12%)	150 (13.04%)	116 (12.95%)
White Non-European	55 (2.16%)	26 (2.26%)	18 (2.01%)
Other White background	66 (2.59%)	22 (1.91%)	35 (3.91%)
Other mixed background	69 (2.71%)	35 (3.04%)	24 (2.68%)
Any other background	76 (2.99%)	34 (2.96%)	27 (3.01%)
Prefer not to say	30 (1.18%)	15 (1.30%)	11 (1.23%)
Multiple categories	110 (4.32%)	49 (4.26%)	42 (4.69%)

DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS BY CONTRACT TYPE

	Overall	Full-time	Part-time	Freelance
Responses	2,551	856	389	1,117
Average age	38.35	37.52	38.02	39.10
Gender				
Female	1,737 (68.3%)	529 (61.9%)	301 (77.4%)	767 (68.9%)
Male	771 (30.3%)	315 (36.8%)	83 (21.3%)	330 (29.6%)
Intersex	5 (0.2%)	1 (0.1%)	1 (0.3%)	3 (0.3%)
Prefer not to say	29 (1.1%)	10 (1.2%)	4 (1.0%)	13 (1.2%)
Transgender	21 (0.9%)	6 (0.8%)	5 (1.4%)	10 (1.0%)
Industry				
Music	551 (21.6%)	133 (15.5%)	101 (26.0%)	283 (25.3%)
Theatre	1,603 (62.8%)	578 (67.5%)	206 (53.0%)	687 (61.5%)
Dance	397 (15.6%)	145 (16.9%)	82 (21.1%)	147 (13.2%)
Marital status				
Single	600 (23.6%)	227 (26.6%)	79 (20.4%)	247 (22.2%)
Married	1,190 (46.8%)	364 (42.6%)	196 (50.6%)	542 (48.6%)
Civil partnership	17 (0.7%)	8 (0.9%)	1 (0.3%)	8 (0.7%)
Living with partner	569 (22.4%)	200 (23.4%)	89 (23.0%)	243 (21.8%)
Divorced	77 (3.0%)	25 (2.9%)	10 (2.6%)	34 (3.0%)
Widowed	15 (0.6%)	4 (0.5%)	3 (0.8%)	8 (0.7%)
Separated	40 (1.6%)	10 (1.2%)	4 (1.0%)	23 (2.1%)
Engaged	3 (0.1%)	2 (0.2%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.1%)
Prefer not to say	30 (1.2%)	14 (1.6%)	5 (1.3%)	9 (0.8%)
Academic qualification				
GCSE	77 (3.0%)	27 (3.2%)	6 (1.5%)	37 (3.3%)
A-Level	146 (5.7%)	51 (6.0%)	15 (3.9%)	66 (5.9%)
Vocational (e.g. NVQ)	248 (9.7%)	97 (11.3%)	30 (7.7%)	100 (9.0%)
Bachelor's degree	1,390 (54.6%)	456 (53.3%)	215 (55.3%)	617 (55.2%)
Master's degree	609 (23.9%)	192 (22.5%)	107 (27.5%)	273 (24.4%)
Doctorate degree	53 (2.1%)	22 (2.6%)	12 (3.1%)	16 (1.4%)
None of the above	25 (1.0%)	10 (1.2%)	4 (1.0%)	8 (0.7%)
Ethnicity				
Bangladeshi	1 (0.04%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (0.26%)	0 (0.00%)
Indian	13 (0.51%)	3 (0.35%)	2 (0.52%)	6 (0.54%)
Pakistani	2 (0.08%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (0.26%)	0 (0.00%)
British Asian	14 (0.55%)	3 (0.35%)	2 (0.52%)	8 (0.72%)
Other Asian background	7 (0.27%)	4 (0.47%)	1 (0.26%)	0 (0.00%)
African	19 (0.75%)	5 (0.58%)	3 (0.77%)	8 (0.72%)
Caribbean	9 (0.35%)	3 (0.35%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (0.27%)
Black British	34 (1.34%)	13 (1.52%)	2 (0.52%)	15 (1.34%)

	Overall	Full-time	Part-time	Freelance
Other Black background	3 (0.12%)	1 (0.12%)	1 (0.26%)	0 (0.00%)
Chinese	4 (0.16%)	1 (0.12%)	2 (0.52%)	1 (0.09%)
British Chinese	4 (0.16%)	4 (0.47%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)
Other Chinese background	3 (0.12%)	1 (0.12%)	2 (0.52%)	0 (0.00%)
White British	1,931 (75.84%)	663 (77.54%)	299 (77.06%)	831 (74.46%)
White European	334 (13.12%)	95 (11.11%)	51 (13.14%)	167 (14.96%)
White Non-European	55 (2.16%)	17 (1.99%)	5 (1.29%)	27 (2.42%)
Other White background	66 (2.59%)	19 (2.22%)	13 (3.35%)	30 (2.69%)
Other mixed background	69 (2.71%)	16 (1.87%)	5 (1.29%)	41 (3.67%)
Any other background	76 (2.99%)	22 (2.57%)	10 (2.58%)	39 (3.49%)
Prefer not to say	30 (1.18%)	11 (1.29%)	5 (1.29%)	12 (1.08%)
Multiple categories	110 (4.32%)	25 (2.92%)	14 (3.61%)	63 (5.65%)



## PARTICIPANTS BY JOB ROLES

Dance roles	Number	%
Performer	64	16%
Administration & Management	61	16%
Artistic Director	34	9%
Chief Executive / Senior Manager	32	8%
Consulting	3	1%
Dance Film Maker / Photographer	2	1%
Dance Lecturer or Academic Researcher	27	7%
Dance Teacher / Community Dance Practitioner	53	14%
Designer	2	1%
Front of House / Box Office	1	0%
Fundraising	3	1%
Healthcare Practitioner / Dance Scientist	8	2%
Various/ multi-role	4	1%
Marketing / Press & PR / Communications / Journalism	20	5%
Movement Director / Choreographer	23	6%
Model	1	0%
Non-performing various	1	0%
Producer / Programmer	30	8%
Rehearsal Director	4	1%
Stage Management / Technical / Production / Lighting	14	4%
Wigs & Wardrobe	3	1%
	390	

Music roles	Number	%
Performer / DJ / Singer / Musician	158	30%
Administration & Management	48	9%
Booking Agent / Promoter / Tour Management	7	1%
Community & Health	1	0%
Consulting / contracting	2	0%
Costume & design	2	0%
Director	2	0%
Film / video	2	0%
Front of House / Box Office / Ticketing / Sales	2	0%
Fundraising and Events	3	1%
Label services	2	0%
Legal & Accountancy	4	1%
Live Technician: Sound / Lighting / Instrument	12	2%
Marketing / Press & PR / Communications / Journalism	11	2%
Music Producer / Engineer / Arranger	19	4%
Music Tutor / Teacher / Lecturer	142	27%
Orchestral Member	66	12%
Radio	1	0%
Retired	1	0%
Stage Management / Technical / Production / Lighting	10	2%
Talent Management	8	2%
Various / multi role	4	1%
Writer / Lyricist / Composer	26	5%
	533	

## PARTICIPANTS BY JOB ROLES CONTINUED

Theatre roles	Number	%
Performer	360	23%
Administration & Management	124	8%
Artistic Director	79	5%
Casting	6	0%
Designer (Lighting / Set / Costume)	83	5%
Development / Engagement / Participation	12	1%
Director / Assistant Director	63	4%
Events & Hospitality	2	0%
Facilities / Venues	4	0%
Film / Video	1	0%
Front of House / Box Office	40	3%
Fundraising	12	1%
Marketing / Press & PR / Communications / Journalism	46	3%
Movement Director / Choreographer	12	1%
Portfolio / multi-role	16	1%
Producer	76	5%
Programmer	3	0%
Senior Management	68	4%
Sound	8	1%
Stage door	5	0%
Stage Management / Technical / Production / Lighting	345	22%
Talent management / recruitment	3	0%
Teaching, Training & Education	38	2%
Wigs & Wardrobe	121	8%
Writer / Playwright	27	2%
Other	14	1%
	1,568	



# 53 FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES

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PARENTS & CARERS  
IN PERFORMING ARTS